THE TIMES

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Parents told to peel 'pesticide' fruit

By Michael Hornsby
Agriculture Correspondent

PARENTS were warned last night by the Government to peel fruit before feeding their children with it after dangerous levels of an organophospate pesticide linked to Gulf War Syndrome were found in imported and home-grown apples on sale in shops.

The worst contaminated apples contained up to six times the amount of the pesticide that can be consumed at one sitting without any risk to health, the Ministry of Agriculture said yesterday. Organophosphate chemicals of the same type have also been blamed for illnesses suffered by farmers after dipping sheep. The chemicals work by attacking the nervous system.

Dr Jeremy Metters, the Government's Deputy Chief Medical Officer, said: "Washing fruit before consumption is always a sensible precaution to ensure it is clean. Peeling fruit is a matter of consumer choice, but is a sensible additional precaution when preparing fruit for small children".

Calling for international action to tighten controls on pesticides, Angela Browning, the Food Minister, said: "There is no need for consumers to be alarmed. I am still eating apples with confidence, though I try to remember to wash them." She added: "The results do show a need for international standards to be further examined in some cases and action will be set in hand. We will be discussing with domestic producers the scope for reducing pesticide levels and commissioning research."

Scientists say that eating two apples weighing a quarter of a pound each, if both happened to contain the highest pesticide traces found in the survey, could cause stomach pains, particularly in small children.

They said, however, that the dietary benefits of eating apples and other fruit and vegetables far outweighed any risks from exposure to pesticides. The adage "an apple a day keeps the doctor away" was still good advice. Average consumption is no more than one apple per person a week.

Sir Colin Berry, chairman of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides, an independent scientific body, said: "Putting the risk in perspective, the chance of finding a high-residue apple is less than one in a thousand. The chance of picking two of these apples together and eating them one after another would be one in a million."

Dr Metters said that even eating two high-residue apples in succession would not necessarily produce any ill effect. "It might produce a griping stomach in an infant, but it might well not."

The Consumers' Association welcomed the tighter monitoring of pesticide residues, but said responsibility for food safety should not be shifted from producers to consumers. Sue Todd, of the association's food research division, said: "We want to see pesticides reduced to a level which will enable people to benefit from the nutrition contained in fruit and vegetable skins."

Ron Barker, chairman of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Information Bureau, said: "We are the first country to carry out such in-depth testing and are constantly working to tighten safety procedures and minimise pesticide usage. We should continue to eat the recommended five portions of fresh fruit and vegetables every day in order to gain essential vitamins to function and maintain general good health."

The most contaminated apple found in the survey was a home-grown Worcester Pearmain which contained 11 times the recommended maximum residue level (MRL) of triazophos, an organophosphate insecticide.

Scientists estimate that a schoolchild or adult who ate one unpeeled apple containing that amount of triazophos would be consuming between four and six times the "acute reference dose". This is defined as the maximum amount that can be consumed "on a single occasion in the practical certainty that no harm will result".

Peeling apples greatly reduces the amount of chemical consumed, the survey found, but does not eliminate it because some of the pesticide is left in the flesh of the fruit.

Of a total of 700 apples analysed, 126 contained pesticide residues above the recommended MRL, but in most cases only slightly so. Scientists say the safety margins built into these legal limits mean they can be breached occasionally by quite large amounts without any risk to health.

Mark Davis, of the Pesticides Trust, which campaigns for a reduction in the use of chemicals in farming, said: "The survey shows that there can be big, and as yet unexplained, variations in the residue levels between individual fruit in the same batch. Most current monitoring for pesticide residues here and abroad is based on bulk sampling which cannot pick up these differences."

'Be sure with us' will be Major's slogan

By Philip Webster
Political Editor

JOHN MAJOR will launch the Conservative general election campaign today with an attempt to reclaim the centre ground from Tony Blair and a promise that the next Tory government will help the "have-nots become the haves".

Mr Major, his preparations damaged by a call from Edwina Currie for him to go quickly if the Tories lose the election, will unveil the Tory slogan — You can only be sure with the Conservatives — and pave the way for the longest campaign in modern times.

At its heart will be a comparison of the stability offered by the Tories with the risks presented by an untried Labour government. But the last of many attempted fightbacks in recent years was dealt a heavy blow by the spectacle of senior MPs openly discussing the scale of potential defeat.

One suggested that many of the leadership candidates might be swept away. With ministers admitting that the Tories are the election underdogs, it was the last thing Mr Major needed.

It was the kind of self-inflicted wound that has dogged the Prime Minister for years, and one which left Conservative activists arriving in Bath for the last big Tory gathering before the election angry and dismayed.

Mrs Currie, the former health minister sacked during the salmonella-in-eggs controversy, said in a BBC interview that the leadership contest was already well under way. "There is already a great deal of formation of columns and lines and factions and

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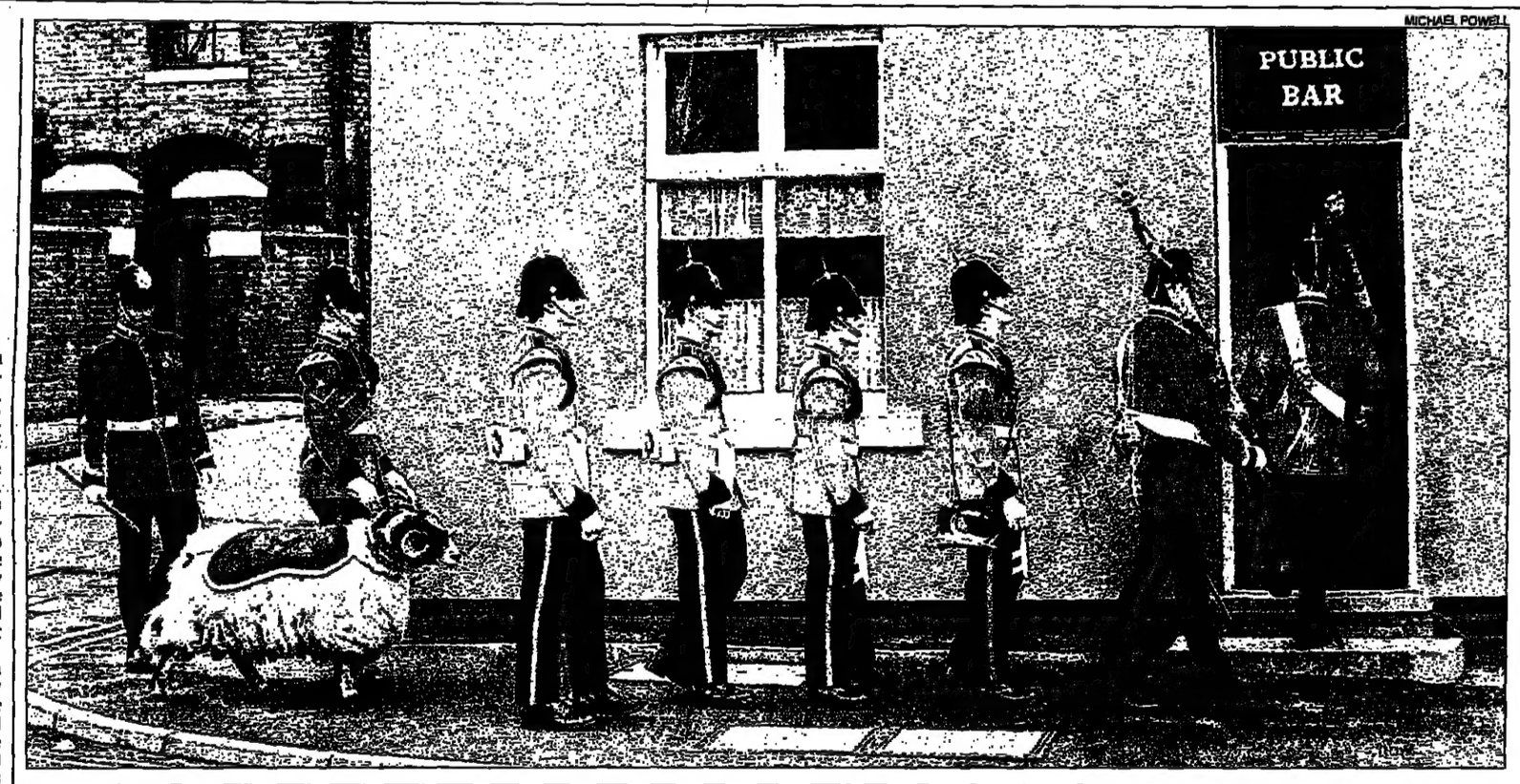


MICHAEL POWELL

Ram helps drum up recruits

THE ANCIENT military tradition of recruiting over a pint of ale was revived in a Derbyshire pub yesterday, with the help of a Swaledale ram (Kathryn Knight writes).

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment visited the Miners Arms in Ilkeston as part of a three-week recruitment drive in West Midland pubs. More than 300 soldiers from the Wiltshire-based regiment have formed teams of four to scour up to 88 pubs targeted as popular with young people in the area. Private Derby the 26th, the regimental mascot, has accompanied them.

Drinkers run no risk of finding the King's Shilling at the bottom of their glass: potential recruits are given a card directing them to the nearest Army careers office. The Army is 5,000 men short and the scheme, which is approved by the Ministry of Defence, is being watched closely by other regiments.

Foster father is charged with murder of Billie-Jo

By Emma Wilkins

THE foster father of Billie-Jo Jenkins was remanded in custody yesterday after appearing in court charged with her murder.

Sion Jenkins, 39, was also charged with "dishonestly obtained a pecuniary advantage" by falsely representing his educational qualifications and teaching experience to gain employment as deputy headmaster of William Parker School in Hastings, East Sussex.

Mr Jenkins, who was dressed in a navy blazer, blue and white checked open-necked shirt and beige trousers, spoke only to give his name, address and to confirm his date of birth during the 30 minutes hearing at Hastings Magistrates' Court.

Sion Jenkins, who became legal guardian of Billie-Jo

Billie-Jo, 13, was found four weeks ago bludgeoned to death with a metal tent spike as she painted patio doors in the garden of her home on February 15. Mr Jenkins was arrested three weeks ago and released on bail after 35 hours in custody. He has been living in Wales since then and was arrested after keeping a prearranged meeting with police officers in Hailsham, East Sussex, on Thursday afternoon.

His wife, Lois, 35, who did not attend the court hearing, is living at the family home in Hastings with the couple's four daughters, Annie, 12, Lottie, 10, Esther, 9, and Maya, 7.

At a press conference held three days after the murder, Mr Jenkins and his wife, a social worker, made an appeal for help in catching Billie-Jo's killer. He went on to pay tribute to Billie-Jo, whom the couple had fostered for five years before becoming her legal guardians last December jointly with her natural father, William Jenkins.

Brendan Salsbury, Mr Jenkins's solicitor, told magistrates that his client denied the murder charge.

Albanians fire on rescue helicopters

From Tom Rhodes in Washington

AMERICAN, Italian and German rescue helicopters came under fire in Albania yesterday and the United States was considering the despatch of Marines for a beachhead rescue. A European envoy said that foreign intervention was vital to end the anarchy.

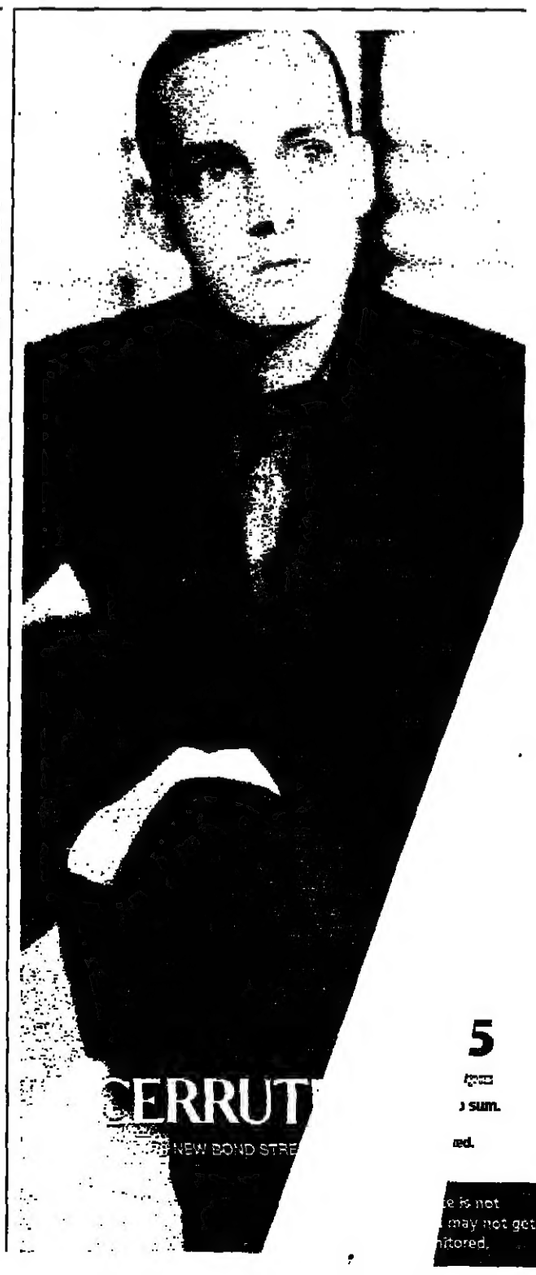
Gunmen fired a missile at US helicopters evacuating Americans and the Pentagon suspended its helicopter missions when two US Marine Cobra helicopter pilots separately reported that they had drawn fire from the ground. German helicopter-born rescue missions were also halted after German troops had to fire back at Albanian secret servicemen.

US officials were contemplating various options to ferry some 2,000 American citizens to safety, including moving people closer to beaches and taking them out in boats. A battalion of 2,000 Marines, specially trained for emergency rescue operations, was standing by on US naval ships in the Adriatic.

Other possibilities were the forced re-opening of Tirana airport, an increased American military presence on the ground and the deployment of more gunships and Harrier jumpjets to protect the helicopter missions. The American Ambassador and 17 key staff were staying in Tirana.

Escaping Britons were due to arrive in the Italian port of Brindisi last night.

Britons flee, pages 18, 19



Liverpool keeper forced to kick computer games into touch

By David Maddock and John Goodbody

A PREMIERSHIP goalkeeper has fingered the problem which caused him to let in three sloppy goals this week and to jeopardise his own international career with England: computer games.

David James, the Liverpool goalkeeper, has accepted the blame for all the goals scored by Newcastle United in a thrilling match on Monday night. Liverpool eventually won 4-3 but not before James's errors — watched by Glenn Hoddle, the England manager — had allowed a 3-0 lead to slip away. "I realise now that computer games have affected my performance badly," James explained. "I was getting carried away playing *Tekken II* and *Teamraider* for hours on end." He said that his friend, Colin Jackson, the world record-holder for the 110m hurdles had alerted him to the dangers after the Newcastle match. "Colin told me athletes are banned from playing computer games before big races because it takes the mental edge off their performances — and that costs vital fractions of seconds. I know what he means. The last time I had a nightmare was at Middlesbrough in the Coca-Cola Cup, and I had played Nintendo for eight hours beforehand."

Britain's Olympic competitors were briefed in Atlanta not to spend long hours playing computer games. The recommendation came from Brian Miller, one of the psychologists to the British Olympic Association. He said: "Members of the British rowing squad found ... after they had played games such as *Doom*, for long periods, that they became very tired for their training sessions ... apparently some athletes were even dreaming of the computer games."

James has now banned himself from playing computer games until after the end of the season — "which is good news for my kids, who complain I've been hogging them".

Model goalkeeper, page 53

James: accepts the blame

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South West Trains faces £1m fine for poor service

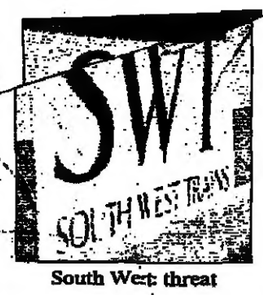
By Kathryn Knight

THE operators of South West Trains were told yesterday they faced a £1 million punitive unless service improved by Office of Rail Franchising, the regulator. SWT was told that unless they reached set targets by the end of April they could also lose their seven-year franchise.

The order, the first to be taken against a privatised rail company, follows weeks of delays and timetable alterations for exasperated commuters and marks a tough new approach by the industry regulator. SWT, which is run by Stagecoach, has to restore services to 98.5 per cent capacity during the month of April or pay a £1 million fine.

If the service level falls below 97.55 per cent of capacity, the regulator has the option of terminating their franchise. The move follows a £750,000 penalty imposed by Opraf for delays and cancellations to SWT's services during February after the company cancelled hundreds of trains after making 71 drivers redundant. They still face penalties for March disruptions.

John O'Brien, franchising director of OPRAF, said the enforcement order against SWT was being made as they were still cancelling up to 39 trains a day because of driver shortages. This is between 2.2 per cent and 3.5 per cent short of the usual 1,500 trains a day.



South West threat

"I pay them to run a service and if they fail to deliver that they will be penalised," Mr O'Brien said. "I am acting to protect the passenger and SWT have until the end of April to convince me that they are operating a proper service and will continue to do so.

"It's been rotten news for passengers. Bluntly, they have been messed around weeks and it's time to stop."

Mr O'Brien denied that Opraf had been forced to act after Thursday night's anarchic scenes but said his hand had been forced by the realisation that SWT was likely to breach its franchise agreement in March period by cancelling more than 1.5 per cent of its trains. Under yesterday's order, South West Trains are required to display two posters at each of their 250 stations explaining to passengers their targets.

There were angry scenes on a South West service to Exeter from Waterloo on Thursday night after frustrated passengers hijacked the train when it was announced it would stop short at Salisbury.

In a separate announcement today, Mr O'Brien said SWT had also committed itself to five new measures at a cost of £1 million, including spending £500,000 on station improvements, £250,000 on improving train reliability, and better passenger information.

Opraf's action was welcomed by Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, who said: "Customers have a right to expect a decent, reliable service and for several weeks many of them have not been getting one. Today's announcement makes it clear that the Government in general and the Franchising Director in particular stand four-square behind the rights of the travelling public."

Running on aggression

By Adam Jones

STAGECOACH, the company that operates South West Trains, is famed for the aggressive competitiveness that has seen it grow from a family-run enterprise into a £1.8 billion public company. Confrontation with regulatory bodies, particularly the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, is a way of life.

The company is dominated by two of its founders, Brian Souter, 43, and Ann Gloag, his older sister by 12 years. They grew up in a council house in Perth before building up a firm that is one of the most powerful players in the deregulated transport industry.

The company, still based in modest offices in Perth, floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1993 and has been a extremely successful stock for investors.

Gloag: owner of Beaufort Castle

Mr Souter, the chairman, owns 36.5 million shares worth £267 million at current market prices. In 1995-1996 he was paid a total of £371,000.

Mrs Gloag, a director, owns 30.5 million shares, worth £224 million, and was paid £189,000 last year. She owns Beaufort Castle in Scotland, the ancestral home of the Lovat family.

In amassing its bus empire through a rapid series of acquisitions and the aggressive squeezing of rivals, Stagecoach has had many brushes with regulators. The MMC has ruled in six cases that Stagecoach could not take a stake in another operator because it would give them too much of a stranglehold on the market, acting against the public interest. In August 1995, the company's behaviour in running a rival bus operator out of business in Darlington was condemned by the MMC as "predatory" and "deplorable" behaviour. It had poached staff and was runnning free buses a few minutes ahead of the rival service.

South West Trains was Stagecoach's first railway franchise, bought for a nominal £1. It has since bought the Island Line on the Isle of Wight.

A Shell poster from 1939, featuring the familiar slogan and the painting *Racing Motorists*

Election slogan is sure to remind voters of Shell

By Carol Midgley and Polly Newton

THE slogan which will provide the theme for the Tories' election campaign will be announced today. "You Can Only Be Sure With The Conservatives" is intended to hammer home the message that the Tory Party is the only one to be trusted, but for thousands of voters it will carry echoes of another advertising campaign which ran for more than 50 years in Britain. The oil company Shell became a household name with its legendary corporate jingle, *You Can Be Sure of Shell*, which ran up until the early 1990s.

The set from which John Major will address the Tory faithful in Bath today has been designed specifically to allow a spectacular launch of the new slogan. A senior source said the Prime Minister's performance would feature "a moment of excitement", which is understood to involve technical wizardry rather than grand oratory. "It will be something to surprise the activists," the source said.

Yesterday, however, insiders from the advertising industry were predicting it would be rather more of a damp squib. "It just seems to be using the Shell idea but it isn't half as snappy," said one senior executive. "Would it be too awful a pun to say they seem to have run out of fuel?"

Stefano Hatfield, the editor of *Campaign*, said the slogan was similar to Shell's but not similar enough to require consultation with the company.

"Everyone who is old enough will be reminded of Shell but it is not that close. Shell doesn't use that line anymore, but in any case it is a very grey area with regard to copyright. Ads play off other ads all the time and it is very rarely that you need to get permission."

Asked his verdict on the slogan, Mr Hatfield added: "It is a bit meaningless, really, isn't it?"

Conservative Central Office denied the slogan was drawing on the Shell concept. Instead, it was designed to convey the solidness and safeness of the party.

Steve Hilton, who works for Lord Saatchi, the Tories' advertising guru, said: "I think the significance is in the strategic thought behind the words. Consider the risks of voting Labour but be sure about the Conservatives."

The Shell television advert was devised by Ogilvy and Mather. The slogan appeared on dozens of posters as well as in a long-running corporate television campaign. The copyrighter is understood to have left Ogilvy and Mather several years ago.

The Conservatives have paid increasing attention to conference sets in recent years, abandoning the traditional platform arrangement of powerful people in rows in favour of the dramatically lit, geometric design of the kind seen in Bournemouth last year.

"We have tried to move away from the Politburean reviewing the troops look," said one strategist.

During the election campaign, each of the venues used by the Tories for rallies outside London will have its own tailor-made set, created by British Airways designer Michael Lockett.

'Be sure with us,' says Major

Continued from page 1

groups," she said. But she added that if Mr Major stayed on after a defeat to allow the dust to settle, it would be a disaster. "If there is going to be a leadership contest, please, John, please don't hang around. "We ought to have a leadership contest that is over cleanly and quickly and then the new leader, whoever he or she is, can get on with the task of uniting the party and preparing it for the next term in Parliament."

John Biffen, the former Cabinet minister, suggested that defeat might be so crushing that Mr Major would have to hold on to allow potential successors to be returned in by-elections. Mrs Currie's damaging intervention, seized upon as a gift by Labour, came just after Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, became the first of several heavyweight ministers to demand discipline and unity. Speaking in Bath's assembly rooms, he admitted it would be a difficult election.

But he said: "We will fight a tough election. We will fight a serious election. And we will fight that election united as a party and determined to win." Within two hours, news of Mrs Currie's bombshell was reverberating around the Bath meeting. Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative chairman, was cheered loudly when he delivered a warning that could have been prepared for Mrs Currie and all like her. "To every Conservative, one message," he said. "If you don't have something to say that will help us win, don't say anything at all."

Privately, many senior constituency officials at the conference were blaming the behaviour of MPs and ministers for the party's present plight.

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Bingham attacks politically driven justice reforms

By Frances Gibb, Legal Correspondent

THE country's most senior judge last night delivered an unprecedented rebuke to Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, and Jack Straw, his Labour Shadow, for using reform of the criminal justice system to score political points.

Lord Bingham of Cornhill, the Lord Chief Justice, sharply criticised Mr Howard's latest reforms, including plans to limit the right to jury trials, which he said had been drawn up without proper consultation and could lead to "unforeseen consequences".

"It is highly undesirable that changes of the kind now under discussion should be the subject of party political controversy," Lord Bingham said. There was room for differing views on how to ensure the system was fair, efficient and cost-effective, acquitted the innocent and convicted the guilty, he said.

But that should be an argument about means and not ends. "It is very unfortunate if those who hold differing views seek to brand their opponents as lacking sincerity in their opposition to crime, or as indifferent to the evils which flow from it."

Historically, criminal justice reforms had not occupied the political foreground. "It would be welcome if the future were to bring a return to a more measured and bi-partisan approach."

Lord Bingham was giving his first public reaction to Home Office recent proposals which include scrapping the right to elect trial by jury for a raft of offences. In an address to Gloucestershire magistrates, he gave a point-by-point critique of Mr Howard's plans: proposals to restrict the right to elect trial by jury raised "far-reaching problems," he said.

"I think it is an important and valuable principle that those liable for conviction of serious crime by justices should voluntarily accept the justices' exercise of jurisdiction."

"Even in the relaxed moral climate of today, there remain offences which, although not very grave viewed in the context of the whole criminal calendar, are sufficient to blight a defendant's professional reputation or destroy his standing in the local community." He added: "If in such cases a defendant, acting on responsible professional advice, seeks trial before a judge and jury, it is a potentially significant change to deny him that right."

Bingham: derided Home Secretary's proposals

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'It's not stealing, but a badly needed reallocation of economic resources'

Priest advocates shoplifting from 'evil' superstores

By Michael Horsnell

A CLERGYMAN yesterday advocated shoplifting from supermarkets to retaliate for the damage he claimed they did to local communities. The Rev John Papworth said that theft was justified and added: "I don't regard it as stealing. I regard it as a badly needed reallocation of economic resources."

The 75-year-old Church of England priest, who works part-time in the north London area of St John's Wood, made the remarks in front of police officers at a community committee called to discuss the fight against crime.

Mr Papworth said after Tuesday's meeting of Paddington and Marylebone Police Community Consultative Committee that he had shoplifted when young. "I would do it now, but like most clergymen, I don't have the courage of my convictions," he said. Yesterday he stood by his defence of shoplifting from superstores, which he condemned as "places of evil and temptation" that had forced small shops out of business.

Peter Russell, the chairman of the Home Office-sponsored committee, said: "I have read the Ten Commandments, one of which is, 'Thou shalt not steal'. It is wrong whether there is temptation or not."

Mr Papworth, who assists with services at St Mark's Church, St John's Wood, told *The Times*: "You can steal from a person — though you must not — but you cannot steal from a thing. These huge shops are the enemies of civilisation, creaming off profits, promoting unemployment, causing widespread bankruptcies of small businesses.

"They are a dagger in the guts of civilisation and the more they flourish, the more civilisation goes down the drain. They are doing that in seven-league strides because we have destroyed the structure, powers and prerogatives of local neighbourhoods. You cannot have morality without community."

Mr Papworth, a widower with three children, was brought up in an orphanage in Shoreditch, east London. He was ordained while in Zambia, where he was a personal assistant to President Kaunda in the Seventies. He has written two books, *Small is Powerful* and *New Politics*, which advocate the restoration of community life. He refuses to shop in supermarkets and believes that one day should be set aside each year for shoppers to help themselves free of charge in supermarkets.

He was imprisoned in the Sixties with Bertrand Russell for his part in the Committee of 100 marches calling for the nuclear bomb to be banned and was jailed in the United States after taking part in a march for black rights.

He told the community committee that people were tempted into supermarkets by propaganda. "Once you are inside, there are these lavish displays of goods. Yet hardly enough staff are attendant on them. Of course people are tempted and sometimes walk out without paying. I have every sympathy for them, in fact I think they are fully justified."

A spokesman for the Bishop of London, the Right Rev Richard Chartres, said: "They are his views. The bishop would not hold himself accountable for anything he says. One might say it is unfair to put temptation in people's way, but this does not make it right. There is a basic premise that people should not take things that do not belong to them."

The Rev John Barrie, the vicar of St Mark's, said: "I certainly do not agree with what he is saying. Stealing is always wrong."

Andrew Coker, a spokesman for Tesco, said: "I find it very surprising that a vicar should be encouraging people to commit a sin."

Mr Papworth: "These huge shops are a dagger in the guts of civilisation"

Sculptor who sought peace threatened to kill farmhands

By Joanna Bale

A SCULPTOR who moved to Devon in search of tranquillity threatened to shoot two farmhands because he was annoyed by the noise of their tractors, a court was told yesterday.

Steven May, 32, admitted two charges of making a threat to kill and was sentenced to 2½ years in prison. Exeter Crown Court was told that May moved from London to east Devon, where he bought a smallholding in Cheriton Bishop, with 20 sheep, two horses, goats, chickens and two dogs.

He wanted a quiet and peaceful place where he could concentrate on his art undisturbed.

Ruth Vincent, for the prosecution, said that he had repeatedly asked the farmhands to keep the noise down after they started work with their tractors in a field neighbouring his home.

On May 26 last year, May had been drinking heavily when he approached them. After a brief row he returned with what appeared to be a double-barrelled shotgun.

He pointed it at them and tried to make the men kneel in front of their tractors, saying: "This is my private entrance, and if you try to leave through it. I will blow your heads off."

The court was told that May then took the gun away and showed the farm workers that it had no stock. It was just the barrels of a rusty shotgun. But the two men, who were terrified, fled and alerted the police.

Ms Vincent said: "He said he was fed up with the noise being made by the men in the field."

May also pleaded guilty to cultivating two cannabis plants, for which he was sentenced to 28 days, to run concurrently. Geoffrey Mercer, for the defence, said May, a graduate who worked as an artist and sculptor, bitterly regretted his action.

"He had shown remorse for his victims. He did not consider how frightened the two men would be. He was clearly angry at the time.

"He felt they had been utterly inconsiderate. He had gone up to them and they had laughed." He said May had shown the farmhands that the gun was not real.

He told the court that May had now moved away from Devon and had no intention of returning.

Judge Neville, sentencing May, said: "Your conduct on this occasion, by threatening to kill these two men with a realistic looking shotgun, is so serious that only a custodial sentence can be justified."

Minister jailed for stealing £56,000 from police bank account

A CHURCH minister who headed a charity supported by the Prince's Trust was jailed for 18 months yesterday for the theft of £56,000 of police cash. Terence Mene, 53, known as The Shepherd by worshippers at The Celestial Church of Christ in Mitcham, Surrey, used some of the money to buy a candle-making machine but most of what was left disappeared.

The money had been safe in Bank of England until a cleverly forged letter, apparently signed by three Metropolitan Police officials, was received authorising its transfer. Southwark Crown Court was told. Within days of it being sent to a Trustee Savings Bank account that Mene had set up for his Celestial Fund for Children and Battered Women, all but a few hundred pounds had been withdrawn.

Mene of Crofton Road, Camberwell, south east London, was cleared of using a false instrument with intent — the bogus letter — but convicted of three counts of theft in August 1995.

The Recorder, Philip Singer, QC, told him: "It is a very sad day to see a church minister in your position. You are the shepherd of your flock. You are held in respect and esteem by many people.

"This was a sophisticated and barefaced fraud on the Bank of England and although you have been acquitted of participation in that letter you have been convicted of stealing the money. The sums of money were substantial and your dealings were devious."

The judge added: "You told lies to the police and you told lies to the court. You sought to shelter behind your position in order to escape the consequences of your dishonest conduct. It was a betrayal of the trust and respect in which you were held."

The jury heard that Mene set up his charity in 1993 to relieve "hardship and distress" among women who had been assaulted, and to help their children. It had apparently received financial support from Boots the Chemist, and on one occasion was given £1,500 by the Prince's Trust headed by the Prince of Wales. Donations were also sought from the John Paul Getty Trust and the National Lottery.

Peter Grieves-Smith, for the prosecution, said the £56,400 illegally withdrawn from the Metropolitan Police's district authority fund had since been reimbursed by the Bank of England. Mene used £30,000 to buy the candle-making machine as part of a project connected with his charity.

When arrested a few weeks later he claimed most of the remainder had gone on redecorating and rebuilding his church premises — a building called "The Miracle Centre" — but invoices he produced to back up his story were bogus.

He told officers that as it was his charity's regular practice to solicit funds from various organisations, he never thought to question how the money had got into the charity's account or where it had come from. His first thought was to put it to good use, he insisted.

But Mr Grieves-Smith told the jury: "He knew perfectly well he was not entitled to that money."

Mene: devious

Sixth-form student is found hanged

By Joanna Bale

PUPILS at the school attended by Caroline Dickinson, who was murdered on a trip to France, were in mourning again yesterday after one of their classmates was found hanged in an apparent suicide.

Polly Ritchie, 16, a sixth-former at Launceston Community College, Cornwall, was found dead at home on Sunday. Her death is not thought to be connected with that of Caroline, 13, who was raped and killed last July. Caroline's father travelled to Rennes yesterday to monitor the progress of the French police investigation.

The school's head teacher, Alan Wroath, said that Polly's death had come as a complete shock. Mr Wroath said that she had been a talented athlete and an imaginative and creative student who was working on a language newspaper. "Polly was a bright, intelligent student who achieved outstanding grades in all her GCSE subjects." She would have achieved excellent results at A level, he added.

Gun club warden asks for cash from Dunblane funds

By Shirley English

A WARDEN at a Scottish rifle range used by Thomas Hamilton has applied to the Dunblane funds for help when he loses his job. Harry Tomlinson, 33, a father of three from Stirling, expects to be made redundant when Whitestone Rifle Range, two miles from Dunblane, shuts next month.

The range was closed after the massacre at Dunblane Primary School last March when Hamilton killed 16 children and their teacher, Gwen Mayor. Formerly it was used by police, the Territorial Army and gun clubs, Mr Tomlinson said. Hamilton was an "infrequent" visitor to the range.

Yesterday news of Mr Tomlinson's application to both the Dunblane Fund and the Stirling Observer Fund, set up in the wake of the tragedy to accept the donations that flooded into the town, was greeted with disbelief by anti-gun campaigners.

Ann Pearston, founder of the Snowdrop Petition, which is seeking a total ban on handguns, said there would be a public outcry if he was given any money. Members of the public had made donations thinking they would be given to the families of those injured and killed in the massacre, she said. "This man will no doubt receive some redundancy money, some state benefits and possibly get another job. The people who are involved in the tragedy will have to take this to their graves and and need help to cope with it for the rest of their lives," she said.

But Mr Tomlinson, who has worked at Whitestone for three years as a maintenance man, said he did not think his application was insensitive, even though it coincided with the March 13 anniversary. He said: "I am not being callous. I know people lost their children and that's terrible. I have three children of my own, but I am about to lose my job and won't be able to provide for my family. People are making me out to be some sort of ogre, but me losing my job is down to the Dunblane incident."

Rugby club chief cleared of bogus transfer deal

By Russell Jenkins

THE chairman of Wigan Rugby League Club was cleared of intending to pervert the course of justice yesterday.

A jury at Bolton Crown Court found Jack Robinson, 55, not guilty of trying to set up a bogus transfer deal in order to inflate potential libel damages from a newspaper.

The prosecution had alleged that Mr Robinson approached Alfred Davies, the chief executive of a rival club, Leeds, to urge him to write a letter suggesting that he had called off a fictitious £150,000 transfer deal for Great Britain and Wales prop Neil Cowie, due to adverse publicity in the *Wigan Observer*.

Mr Robinson told the court the scheme was the idea of a fellow director and that he had gone along with it to keep him happy and keep the director's financial investment at the club. He said he always knew that Leeds was the kind of club that would stick to the letter of the law and would not be tempted to take part in the deal

Comic ready to stand up for Europe

By James Landale
Political Reporter

BRITAIN'S pro-Europeans revealed their new persuasive spokesman yesterday: the flamboyant comedian Eddie Izzard. It could be the most dramatic contribution to British politics since the Spice Girls spoke of their admiration for Mrs Thatcher.

Izzard, whose choice of clothes and make-up might sometimes appear to rival the Spice Girls, has given his support to the European Movement, which is hunting for celebrity backers. Last night it was not clear how they might make best use of the stand-up comedian who specialises in surreal improvisation.

The group is one of Britain's leading pro-European lobbying outfits trying to combat Euroscepticism in Westminster and across the country. Their current campaign, *Europe 97*, explains the benefits on EU membership. In an attempt to enliven the somewhat dry debate on Europe, the movement decided to canvas support among Britain's celebrities.

Izzard: no plan to share the stage with Heath

While many in the arts world have kept their support close to their chests, Izzard, 36, wrote back saying he was supportive of the campaign and would be delighted to help. He is best known in the political world for his support of the Rock the Vote campaign to get young people into the polling booths.

The comedian, who was unavailable for comment yesterday, is such a keen European that he tells some of his jokes in French, German and even Latin. He is shortly planning to play Dick Turpin in a film.

A spokesman for the European Movement said that Izzard would be coming in soon to discuss how he could help, but emphasised that nothing had been agreed yet. He added: "It is good news. The polls consistently show that people don't believe politicians but they do believe others like businessmen and celebrities. He hasn't agreed to do anything particular yet but it is good to have his support. He is certainly not going to be appearing on the same platform with Sir Edward Heath next week."

Sir Teddy Taylor, the Eurosceptic Tory MP for Southend East, said he would not mind King Kong speaking for the European Movement as long as he was not being paid for by the taxpayer. He added: "I hope that Mr Izzard, in his delightful way, will explain why unemployment in Europe has risen by five million in the past five years. In some ways, this unusual gentleman might be just the person to do it."

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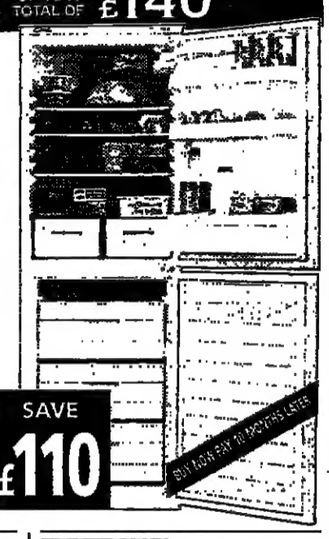

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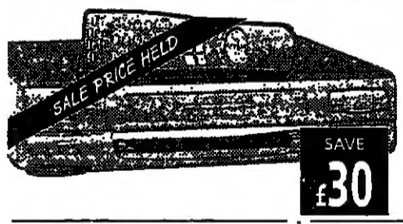

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Bouncer jailed for drunken assault on MP

By Russell Jenkins

A BOUNCER who headbutted the Labour frontbencher Ian McCartney in a workingmen's club was jailed for 12 months yesterday.

Judge Carter said he was jailing Keiron Quinn, 30, not because he assaulted a Member of Parliament but to set an example to others.

At an earlier hearing Quinn, 30, a building foreman, of Wigan, Greater Manchester, had pleaded guilty to assaulting Mr McCartney and causing him actual bodily harm.

The MP, who is 5ft 1in, is a frontbench spokesman on employment and has been waging a long-running campaign for the registration of doormen to eradicate drugs and violence in nightclubs.

Bolton Crown Court was told that Mr McCartney, 45, went to Platt Bridge Labour Club in his constituency, and where he is a member, for a drink at 3pm on November 16 last year. Quinn, who works as a part-time doorman in Wigan at weekends, was "hopelessly drunk". He insulted the MP for Makerfield while he was having a quiet drink, then punched and headbutted him. Mr McCartney suffered a broken nose, blurred vision and a loose tooth in the attack.

Thomas Fitzpatrick, for the defence, told the court that Quinn believed he was a "sacrificial lamb" and had taken exception to Mr McCartney's campaign. He added: "The circumstances are aggravated because the complainant is an MP."

The court was told that Quinn had previous convictions for wounding, assault, criminal damage and aggravated injury. Most of the offences were drink-related.

McCartney: his nose was broken by Quinn

Rescue services face extra risks after £16m defeat

By Frances Gibb, legal correspondent

RESCUE services run the risk of massive damages claims after the Court of Appeal ruled that firefighters are not immune from being sued for negligence. In a test case with wide ramifications, judges yesterday rejected an appeal by a local authority which paid £16 million compensation for a fire brigade blunder.

Hampshire County Council had argued that firefighters, like the police, were immune from being sued for negligence in the course of their duties. The court ruled that, although a fire brigade was not under any common-law duty to answer a call, it could be sued if it created a danger or made things worse on arrival at the scene. Lord Justice Stuart-Smith, sitting with Lords Justices Potter and Judge, said: "There is no ground for giving immunity in such a case."

The destruction of a company headquarters because Hampshire fire officers turned off the sprinkler system was such a case, the judges said, dismissing the authority's appeal against a compensation award won last June by the owners and occupiers of the building. Hampshire is to seek leave to appeal to the Lords. Its legal costs are thought to be over £2 million.

Judgments in three cases yesterday were of vital importance to the insurance industry. In each case, building insurers were behind the claim against the fire service, and insurance companies stand to save millions where liability can be shifted on to a fire authority.

Afterwards Hampshire's joint chief executive, Peter Robertson, said the decision to switch off the sprinklers was "honestly taken by the officer in charge in the belief that that was the best thing to do.

"We take the view that people risking their lives to protect others should have the backing of the law. Firefighters are there day in, day out, in hazardous situations, having to make quick judgments in life-threatening situations. This ruling could lead to defensive firefighting and the diversion of resources away from firefighting in the direction of litigation."

Insurers were paid premiums to cover risks, Mr Robertson said. A clear demarcation was needed between acts which were committed under extreme pressure, and criminal negligence, which was never alleged in this case.

The fire brigade had been called to a roof blaze at Digital Equipment Ltd at Basingstoke, Hampshire. The owners of the building, Capital & Counties, had fitted an automatic sprinkler system which, it was claimed, would have limited the damage to a small area of the roof void, had it not been turned off.

In two other cases yesterday the judges upheld findings that it would not be "just, fair and reasonable" to impose a duty of care on the fire brigades concerned.

A claim against the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority by a plastic waste recycling company, John Munro (Acrylics), whose plant in Wimbledon, southwest London, was gutted by fire, was dismissed when a judge held that the brigade owed no legal duty even to respond to a call. Firefighters initially reported a false alarm after learning that a television crew filming *London's Burning* had set off a controlled explosion on adjacent wasteland.

Mormons tried to sue the West Yorkshire Fire and Civil Defence Authority for £1.8 million over the destruction of a chapel in Huddersfield. A judge struck out the case, holding that the group had no private right of action. Fifteen fire appliances had attended the scene, but it was some time before they were able to deal with the blaze efficiently because of badly maintained hydrants.

ADRIAN SHERRATT

Detective Sergeant Richard Ellis, right, and Martin Summers, of the Lefevre Gallery, with the recovered painting

Picasso thief may have fled to Spain

By Joanna Bale

POLICE hunting the man who stole a Picasso painting worth £650,000 from a London art gallery believe he may be on the run in Spain.

The painting, *Tête de Femme*, was recovered from a man walking along Baker Street, central London, on Thursday in an extraordinary stroke of luck for a long-running covert police operation. A Scotland Yard spokesman said yesterday: "The robbery seems to have been more organised than it originally appeared and it is believed that the man who carried it out has gone abroad." Police yesterday publicised its safe recovery with a photocall outside the Lefevre Gallery in Mayfair, from where it was stolen nine days ago by a man with a sawn-off shotgun.

The robbery took just 35 seconds and was captured on security cameras, but the quality of the film was too bad to reproduce an identifiable picture. The man escaped in a taxi.

A reward of £50,000 had been offered by insurers for the safe return of the 1939 portrait of Picasso's mistress, Dora Maar. It is thought this has not been paid because no members of the public were involved in its recovery.

Forensic scientists examined the painting before sending it to Christie's for authentication. Jackie Bennett, spokeswoman for the South East Regional Crime Squad which recovered the painting, said it did not appear to have been damaged.

Peter Scott, 66, of Islington, north London, and Ronald Spring, 69, of Southgate, north London, were charged yesterday with conspiracy to handle a work of art and will appear at Redbridge Magistrates' Court today.

Stowaway hid in jet's wheel bay

By Richard Ford, home correspondent

AN INDIAN who flew to Britain hidden in the wheel bay of a jumbo jet gave officials three names and at least two stories about his family, an immigration appeals tribunal was told yesterday.

Pardeep Saini, 22, survived the ten-hour ordeal on the Boeing 747 from Delhi but his brother, Vijay, 18, died of hypothermia and his body fell from the undercarriage as the plane prepared to land at Heathrow.

Mr Saini, a car mechanic from the Punjab, claimed asylum after being found wandering on the tarmac. He had survived temperatures as low as -60C and a lack of oxygen.

He was appealing against the Government's refusal to grant him refugee status. Mr Saini, who is living with an uncle in Southall, west London, claims that he was fleeing from persecution in India after being wrongly accused of being a Sikh separatist.

Kate Eshun, the adjudicator at an immigration appeal hearing in south London, said that Mr Saini had initially said, last October, that both his parents were dead. At another interview he claimed that only his mother was dead, she said. The hearing was told that the final account had been prepared by relatives after Mr Saini gave them details of what had happened.

Miss Eshun said that he had given two other names, Jasbir Singh and Joli Singh. His cousin, Raj Bola, told the hearing that Mr Saini's mother was living in India and his father died last December.

Daya Mann, counsel for Mr Saini, said that he had had a traumatic experience and was undergoing psychiatric treatment. Miss Eshun adjourned the hearing until April 18 for psychiatric reports to establish whether the discrepancies were due to Mr Saini's state of mind at the time of the original interview.

Boss 'humiliated' woman over his affairs

By Joanna Bale

A SALES manager left her job after her married boss "humiliated" her with detailed accounts of his affairs with women during Far Eastern business trips, an industrial tribunal was told yesterday.

Maxine Brooks, 55, said that her managing director, Paul Donney, had told her that Indonesian women were used by businessmen as "playthings".

Despite numerous calls and faxes from the women to the office, she was expected to keep Mr Donney's affairs secret from his wife, Elizabeth, who was also a director of the company. Mrs Brooks said she was subjected to details of his affairs, which she found offensive, soon after joining Mr Donney's furniture importers, Charleroi International.

She told the tribunal in Southampton: "He implied that he had numerous affairs every time he went out there on business. He said that women were there to be had on a plate and used by numerous business people as playthings. I was frightened to react because I had just joined the company."

Mrs Brooks, of Southampton, said that, while on a four-week trip to Indonesia in October 1995, Mr Donney would telephone her several times a day about business. She said that during one call he was in bed with a woman.

Mrs Brooks said that, while Mr Donney was away, a colleague found some photographs behind a one-armed bandit in the company's office in Marchwood, Hampshire. "There were about a dozen pictures of Mr Donney with scantily clad women. There were two photos of him in bed with women, along with letters from a woman he had had a relationship with in Indonesia. I found them distressing." Mrs Brooks added that her boss went to Indonesia every three months for four to six weeks at a time. When he returned she would have to deal with telephone calls and personal letters from women he had met there.

When she tried to discuss how unhappy she was with the situation, Mr Donney "raged and swore" at her. She said she was continuously bullied, insulted and humiliated by Mr Donney until she walked out of her job in August last year. She is claiming sexual discrimination and sexual harassment.

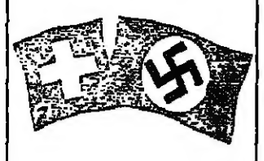
Mr Donney, of Beaulieu, Hampshire, said he had "an active life" in Indonesia and that his wife knew about his girlfriends there. "My main girlfriends are really sincere. I have had three long-established affairs and see them on a regular basis. We are not hiding anything.

"I have not entered into explicit accounts of my sexual activities and would not do so because the relationships are stable and caring. I think Mrs Brooks is doing this to put me in an embarrassing position with my wife."

The tribunal was adjourned.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

HITLER'S CUCKOOS



"Winston Churchill praised Switzerland as a "democratic state, standing for freedom among her mountains". Yet, while Allied soldiers died in the real cause of freedom in the second world war, Swiss banks profited by secretly helping the Nazis"

Tom Bower reveals the causes of Swiss shame in a second extract from his book Blood Money, in The Sunday Times tomorrow

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Proposals follow woman's six-day ordeal

Rape victims to be spared questioning by accused in court

By Richard Ford, Home Correspondent

MEN accused of rape are to lose the right to question their alleged victims in court, under proposals announced by the Home Office yesterday. The move is aimed at preventing women from having to undergo the ordeal of being questioned by the man who may have attacked them.

Last year Ralston Edwards, 42, who was jailed for life for rape, spent six days questioning 34-year-old Julia Mason during his trial at the Old Bailey. He wore the same jeans and jumper as he did during a 16-hour attack at her home in south London.

"He was reliving the rape," Mrs Mason said. She waived her right to anonymity to press for the law to be changed. "No other woman should go through this again."

Under the Government's proposals, judges would be given the discretion to prevent unrepresented defendants in rape cases cross-examining their alleged victims. The judge would have the power to order that only a barrister should conduct the cross-examination.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, is also considering extending the restriction to other offences, although the Home Office was unable to provide further details.

Mr Howard said in a statement: "I fully sympathise with victims who have had to endure further distress by being cross-examined by their alleged attacker. I think it is right that the courts should have the discretion, where necessary, to protect such victims."

Under the Criminal Procedure Act, 1865, defendants have the right to call witnesses and address the jury. Judges cannot force legal representation on the accused, but must guide them on points of law. The Criminal Justice Act, 1991, withdrew the right of suspects conducting their own defence to cross-examine their alleged vicitims if they were children.

Edwards: accused of reliving rape in court

Legal experts are against changing the procedures for rape, arguing that judges have powers to control threatening witnesses. But yesterday's announcement was backed by Victim Support. Paul Collins, a spokesman, said: "Too many women do not report sex crimes because they fear the ordeal facing them if they do.

"While we would not suggest that defendants in rape cases are stripped of their rights, there has to be a balance struck. There is a real risk at the moment that justice is not done for some women who feel unable to face this sort of trauma.

"In the case of Julia Mason, there was even a suggestion that the rapist got some form of sexual pleasure from cross-examining her. It cannot be allowed to continue, and we welcome the announcement."

Janet Anderson, Labour's spokeswoman on women's issues, who has been pressing for such a measure, welcomed the announcement. "It is clearly wrong that any woman or any man should have to go through such an experience."

Virginia McKenna and Bill Travers with the natural stars of *Ring of Bright Water*

Island home to become sanctuary for otters

By Shirley English

THE former island home of Gavin Maxwell, author of *Ring of Bright Water*, is to be made into a wildlife sanctuary for otters, ending uncertainty over its future.

Almost 30 years after the author's death, Eilean Ban, the six-acre isle in the narrow straits between mainland Scotland and Skye, is to be handed over by the Scottish Office to a trust run by the local community.

Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, announced plans for the sanctuary, coupled with an interpretive centre at Kyleakin, on the mainland, yesterday. He said it would be of "economic and environmental benefit" to the people of Skye.

The trust still has to be established and talks between the Scottish Office, Highland Office and community groups are continuing. Government funding for the trust is expected to be available.

The Born Free Foundation, established by Bill Travers and Virginia McKenna, who starred in the 1969 film *Ring of Bright Water*, will have a representative on the trust's board. Last year the couple managed to halt the auction of the island by the Scottish Office by putting forward conservation proposals inspired by Maxwell's dream to turn his "wild, heathery" home into a wildlife haven. The island had remained unchanged for centuries until the Scottish Office bought it in 1992 as a prop for the £35 million Skye Bridge.

Boy raised as girl discovers happiness as man

By Nigel Hawkes

THE story of a boy who was raised as a girl seems to show that gender really is all in the genes. Despite the efforts of psychiatrists, surgeons and parents, he never felt happy as a girl and eventually reverted to being a man, got married and is now living happily.

The man's life history is told as a cautionary tale by Milton Diamond, a sexologist at Hawaii University in *Archives of Paediatric Adolescent Medicine*. He says that it is the first long-term follow-up of a male with the normal allotment of XY chromosomes who was raised as a female.

Dr Diamond says that the problems for "John" began when he was eight months old, in 1963. An accident during circumcision left him without a penis. His parents took him to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, where experts said that the best thing would be to raise him as a girl.

His testicles were surgically removed and an artifical vagina created, as is done in sex-change operations. John became Joan.

The result, says Dr Diamond, has often been extolled as the classic demonstration of how the environment can override nature in forming gender identity. In fact, he says, it was nothing of the sort: it was a disaster.

Despite being raised as a girl, Joan never felt happy. At 12, she was given oestrogen therapy to complete the conversion to a woman. She grew breasts, but was never accepted by other girls, nor felt comfortable as a woman.

At 14, she rebelled, confessing to her doctor: "I suspected I was a boy since the second grade." She was eventually given a mastectomy to remove the breasts and was given male hormones. At the age of 25, now John once more, he married a woman who already had children.

Dr Diamond says that the case history has implications for any child born with ambiguous sexuality. "Keep your knife away," he says. "Let the kids make a decision when they get older."

Michael Bailey, a psychologist at Northwestern University, Illinois, told *Science Now*, a daily science news service run by *Science* magazine, that the case was heralded by many as the pinnacle of proof that psycho-social factors could override biological factors in determining gender.

Textbooks continued to claim that Joan made a successful adjustment, in spite of contradictory evidence. Dr Diamond's report, says Dr Bailey, "suggests that, if anything, how you're reared matters little".

Number of crimes 'is twice official figure'

THE number of offences committed in England and Wales is running at almost twice the five million recorded by police, a MORI survey published today says (Richard Ford writes).

It found that 44 per cent of crime victims failed to report incidents to police because they had no confidence that criminals would be caught, felt the offences were too trivial or believed the police would not investigate. The survey showed that 47 per cent of people had been a victim of crime in the 12 months to December last year.

Although Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, will publish official figures on Monday showing a drop of up to 2 per cent in recorded crime, 88 per cent of the 2,027 people interviewed for the survey in next month's *Reader's Digest* said that their concern about crime had increased either a lot or a little in recent years.

COMPETITION

TICKETS PREMIER

Law threat by victims of abuse

By Dominic Kennedy

VICTIMS of one of Britain's biggest child abuse scandals threatened legal action yesterday unless the Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, ordered a public inquiry within a fortnight.

Solicitors representing 150 abuse victims have already issued writs against the organisations which ran five children's homes at the centre of a three-year police and social services investigation in Merseyside and Cheshire. They are now demanding an official inquiry into their allegation that a paedophile ring has been operating in Britain.

Already 11 paedophiles who managed to get senior jobs in the children's homes have been given prison sentences. Peter Garsden, a solicitor from Cheadle, told a news conference: "If they continue to prevaricate we have to seriously consider taking proceedings against the Government in a judicial review."

Keith Laverack, 52, a former children's home headmaster and social services manager who was jailed for 18 years by Chester Crown Court for 15 child sex offences last week, began his activities in Warrington but moved to Cambridge.

Judge 'misled' into ordering woman to have Caesarean

By Frances Gibb, Legal Correspondent

A JUDGE was misled into granting an order for a pregnant woman to be held in hospital against her will and forced to have her baby by Caesarean section, the High Court was told yesterday.

In an emergency lunch-hour hearing of the Family Division last April, Mrs Justice Hogg was said to have been wrongly informed that the woman was already in labour, that it was a matter of life and death, and that she was refusing food and drink. Hospital lawyers also allegedly failed to tell the judge that the woman had solicitors acting for her.

Yesterday's attempt to challenge the legality of the detention was blocked after Mr Justice Popplewell ruled that "Miss S", who wants her anonymity preserved, had gone beyond the four-month time limit for launching a test action over the Mental Health Act. The 29-year-old single mother from south London will go to the Court of Appeal. In addition, Judge Popplewell said that she could still take her case before the Family Division in a separate challenge over the granting of the order against her wishes and without her knowledge.

Yesterday's ruling came after the High Court heard the first evidence of what happened at a private hearing where judges sanctioned the Caesarean without her being legally represented. Miss S had wanted no medical intervention.

The woman, now the mother of an 11-month-old daughter, was detained in April 1996 when she was about 36 weeks pregnant. A court order was obtained allowing surgeons to operate because of fears about her health and that of her unborn baby, after she developed potentially life-threatening pre-eclampsia.

Richard Gordon, QC, for Miss S, said the court order had been made by a judge who was misled about her condition. Mr Gordon said that during the lunch-hour hearing, Mrs Justice Hogg had been wrongly informed that Miss S had been been in labour for 24 hours and "might die at any minute", and that she was refusing food and drink.

Mr Gordon said: "All this was untrue and is belied by the medical notes. The point is she had never been in labour."

The woman had also written three statements making clear she wanted no medical intervention, none of which were mentioned to the judge; nor was the judge told that doctors believed her fully capable of refusing consent to treatment and unaffected mentally by her medical condition. The lawyer for the hospital seeking the order also allegedly failed to tell the judge that the woman had solicitors who could have put her wishes put forward.

In the immediate aftermath of the operation, Miss S rejected the baby because of the trauma of what had happened and it had to go to foster parents for some weeks, which contributed to the delay on lodging proceedings.

Mr Gordon said that Miss S's case was that her compulsory detention, first at Springfield Hospital, then at St George's, Tooting, was unlawful and that her transfer to St George's was done without the necessary papers.

Miss S, a health service professional, said: "It is onwards and upwards. I am disappointed in the judicial system because the point that Mrs Justice Hogg was misled seems to have been ignored. We are now considering an appeal. I believe bringing this case has raised public awareness about an issue of very great public importance."

CHRIS HELGREN

Mariella Frostrup, left, David Baddiel, Nick Hancock and Emma Freud enter the spirit of the occasion yesterday

Red Nose Day heads for £22m target

By Joe Joseph

COMEDIANS, celebrities and scriptwriters launched their biannual battle yesterday to raise money for the charity Comic Relief.

The centrepiece of the appeal was an eight-hour television marathon, but few corners of the nation were untouched by red-nose hysteria. The television presenter Angus Deayton read BBC Radio 4's shipping forecast yesterday in aid of the appeal, after polling most votes from radio listeners who had telephoned a premium line to raise money for the charity. The vote made £4,000 for Comic Relief, which hopes to raise £22 million for British and African charities.

It was the first time in 71 years that the five-minute broadcast was not read by a BBC announcer. Deayton pre-recorded the broadcast with Radio 4's chief announcer, Peter Donaldson, standing by in case of mistakes.

It is not clear what Deayton was wearing. But on ITV, Judy Finnigan, co-host of This *Morning*, wore a frilly pink nightie and white fluffy slippers to present classic television clips at viewers' requests, which included excerpts from *Fawlty Towers* and *The Two Ronnies*. On BBC1, the former world heavyweight champion Frank Bruno joined *EastEnders* actor Adam Woodyatt in the *Can't Cook Won't Cook* studio for a dessert-making challenge. It ended in a draw but Woodyatt, who plays Ian Beale, was left covered in chocolate sauce.

Even before the appeal began, the organisers looked well on course to beat the £22 million target. By the time donation lines opened yesterday, more than £4 million had been raised through merchandising, donations and events around Britain.

Husband must pay crash wife

By A Staff Reporter

A WOMAN paralysed in a car crash was awarded £750,000 yesterday against her husband, who was driving.

Sandra Kozikowska, 46, won the damages in a written judgment by Lord Dawson at the Court of Session in Edinburgh. She had claimed £2 million from George Kozikowska, 44, and Highland Regional Council after the accident on a snowy Highland road in January 1990. She also claimed £100,000 each for their two children for post-traumatic stress. They were each awarded £20,000.

Mrs Kozikowska, from Dunvegan, Skye, had criticised her husband's driving and the council, claiming that its subcontractors failed to grit the icy road on which her husband had skidded. Lord Dawson cleared the council after deciding that the road had been salted and that Mr Kozikowski's driving had been the cause. He lost control on a bend and hit an oncoming lorry.

Radio host left holding the babies

By Paul Wilkinson

A WOMAN involved in a custody dispute over her two children left them in the studio of a late-night radio show rather than return them to their father.

Alan Robson, the programme presenter, found himself with a sleepy five-year-old boy and his nine-year-old sister, bearing a note asking: "Please look after them." Shortly afterwards, the mother called Metro Radio, based in Gateshead, to check that her children were safe. She told Robson that she did not want to return the children to their father in Leicester after an access visit.

Robson persuaded the woman to go on air, on his *Night Owls* show, to explain her problems. He said: "She alleged that the children wanted to stay with her, but no judge would listen to them." The children are now back with their father.

The 31-year-old mother said: "This was a last-ditch call for help."

Peers urge action to save honey-bee from deadly mite

By James Landale
Political Reporter

PEERS are demanding that the Government spend more time and money to tackle the varroa mite, which is threatening to devastate the honey-bee population.

Honey-bees are vital not only for the £13 million honey industry but also for the pollination of crops. Bees fertilise 80 per cent of the fruit, flowers and agricultural products that need pollinating.

The value of the crops is estimated by the Ministry of Agriculture to be worth £6.9 billion a year to the economy. Unless the parasite *Varroa jacobsoni* is stopped, many farmers and fruit producers could be forced out of business, a House of Lords committee was told.

The mite, which originated in the Far East and came to Britain in 1992, attacks bees both as adults and larvae. It carries a variety of viruses which can deform bees, weaken their wings and shorten their already brief lives. Without enough bees, colonies run out of food and die.

The ministry last week extended the statutory infected area to cover England and Wales. Some beekeepers have lost all their colonies. In one recent survey, the Hampshire Beekeepers Association reported losses of 70 per cent of their bees.

In a report published today, the Lords' European Communities Committee examines European Commission proposals to support beekeeping within the Common Agricultural Policy and urges: "The impact of varroa in particular is something which beekeepers should not be expected to cope with without assistance."


Honey-bee: under threat

The peers say that beekeepers had made a "cogent case for increased publicly-funded research on the detection and control of the disease". They note the declining ministry budget spent researching varroa — £200,000 — and urge the Government to exploit potential European joint-financing schemes.

The Government already spends £1.5 million each year on a bee health service through the Central Science Laboratory. The peers also urged the ministry to encourage good husbandry practices among Britain's 35,000 professional and amateur beekeepers through a systematic programme of education on how to curb the parasite.

Existing treatments can partially control varroa but not eliminate the parasite.

Lord Reay, chairman of the committee, said: "More research and better advice to beekeepers would help the industry to avoid some of the worst problems experienced in other countries where varroa has been around for longer. Part financing from the [European Union] will help but must not simply be substituted for existing national funding."

He said a decline in beekeeping would be a "sad loss to the fabric of rural life with adverse affects on farming and the environment". Ged Marshall, a member of the Bee Farmers' Association and vice-chairman of the European working party on agriculture, said he was pleased by the Lords' support, but criticised the ministry's reluctance to spend money to help.

Alan Johnson, chairman of the British Beekeepers' Association, said he had lost more than 1,000 members over the past 18 months as a result of varroa. "I would love the extra resources," he said. "It is essential that something is done about varroa."


One of the five Antiguan racers hatched at Jersey Zoo. Their births increased the world population of the snake by 10 per cent

First births in captivity of world's rarest snake

By Nick Nuttall

THE world's rarest snake, the Antiguan racer, has been successfully bred for the first time in captivity, raising hopes that the species can be saved in the wild.

Five eggs have hatched into young, weighing just three grams, to the delight of staff at Jersey Zoo. They are the offspring of four adult snakes flown from the Caribbean last year as part of a British-led rescue plan.

The births take the estimated population of *Alsophis antiguae*, which is clinging on at Great Bird Island in Antigua, to 55 specimens. Mark Day, of Fauna and Flora International in Cambridge, which is orchestrating the rescue programme with funding from the Foreign Office, said yesterday that it was hoped to introduce the species to uninhabited islands in the area. He said that the team of conservationists was considering several Caribbean islands, including York and Redhead, where there were plans to clear non-native plants and animals such as rats.

Many of the snakes on Great Bird Island had been killed in the mistaken belief that they were venomous, he added. The team had also found that more than half the snakes had been injured by rats biting the tails that house their reproductive organs.

Visitors learn from the male with breeding

By Shirley English

HE IS romantic, faithful, generous, and helpful around the home. He is also remarkably successful at fathering offspring.

He is a typical male Gentoo penguin at Edinburgh Zoo, where the colony has been so successful that a team of Scandinavian zoo keepers is paying a visit this month to pick up some breeding tips for their own birds. David Field, the man in charge of Edinburgh's penguin enclosure, believes *homo sapiens* could learn a lot as well.

Edinburgh has the world's largest captive colony of the penguins from sub-Antarctic. The annual breeding season starts officially each Valentine's Day, when staff give the birds a broad hint by placing concrete nest rings, pebbles and vegetation into the enclosure to serve as gifts. The zoo has a 50 per cent fertility rate in the Gentoo eggs — equivalent to the wild — and up to 95 per cent of the hatched chicks survive. Many are now sent to zoos around the world.

"The male Gentoo penguin is the epitome of the new man," said Mr Field, 30. "He takes a full role in nest building, looking after eggs and rearing chicks."

Gentoos were very loyal and usually bred for life, although there had been some "divorces" in Edinburgh's 106-strong colony, he said. "Gentoos take great care in making sure their partner doesn't start to roam. During courtship and breeding, the presentation of gifts is very important. Pebbles — the rounder, flatter and shinier, the better — and bits of vegetation, like the odd strand of grass, are given regularly, accompanied by much bowing and cooing."

Occasionally the love birds pinch the best pebbles from rival nests to impress each other. "The males and females are both generous, although the males have the edge. If men could remain quite so loyal and continue to give presents as the Gentoos do, it would not be a bad thing — although don't tell my fiancée that."

Edinburgh Zoo has four types of penguin, in two enclosures with a 60-metre pool. The Gentoo colony, established in 1913, is by far the largest. The birds, up to 2ft tall, are black with a white headband.

Mr Field keeps a close watch on the chicks, even helping some out of the shell, or giving food supplements to weaker ones. The Norwegians hope their visit will help them to provide the right conditions at Bergen Aquarium.

Mr Field said: "They have about six pairs, I believe, but a lot of the eggs are infertile and they have a high chick-mortality rate. I think a lot of our success is down to the birds having choices: of nest site, who they sit next to, and who they pair with. They also respond well to living in a large colony."

Clunes: ironic

Paper pays for bad behaviour

THE star of the television comedy *Men Behaving Badly* accepted £1,000 libel damages yesterday after Sir Bernard Ingham called him a "stupid, nasty, foul-mouthed, posturing juvenile with a limited command of language".

Martin Clunes said that he would donate his High Court settlement from *The Express* to the Aids charity, The Terence Higgins Trust.

Clunes's counsel, Manuel Barca, said that Baroness Thatcher's former press secretary, an *Express* columnist, had misunderstood Clunes as advocating the use of swearing on children's television. In a *Radio Times* interview, Clunes had noted that attitudes to swearing on television had relaxed, and ironically speculated that it would not be surprising if the "F-word" were to be acceptable on children's television in ten years.

BBC's long-playing chart show may lose No 1 slot to new kid on the block

Channel 5's latest release takes on Top of the Pops

By Alexandra Frean, Media Correspondent

THE world's longest-running television chart show, *Top of the Pops*, faces its gravest threat in 33 years as Channel 5 plans to exploit record industry unhappiness to launch a rival programme.

The new channel, which launches on March 30, will compete for top acts such as the Spice Girls, Oasis and U2 in a prime-time weekly show starting in September which will also interview stars and show videos. Dawn Airey, director of programmes, is in negotiations with the Chart Information Network, which provides the hit parade for *Top of the Pops*.

Record companies are already backing the move because of plunging ratings for *Top of the Pops* since the BBC moved it last summer from its regular Thursday night slot to Friday, where it is pitched against *Coronation Street*. Its ratings have halved to three or four million since the move. It is still well ahead of ITV's Saturday morning video-only *Chart Show*, with around 1.5 million viewers, but compares poorly with its peak in the early Eighties, when audiences regularly reached 16 million.

Record companies feel they are owed a say in the programme's positioning, as they often pay to fly their artists to London to record *Top of the Pops*, or cover the cost of live satellite links as well as backdrops and lighting.

Gary Farrow, vice-president of communications at Sony Music UK, said: "We would welcome a new programme on Channel 5 in a big way. It is amazing that we don't have many chart-oriented shows.

"Given the success of the Brits [awards] and the music industry in general, that is surprising. The industry is far more profitable and exciting than film and fashion industries and yet it is not represented that well on television."

A spokesman for the British Phonographic Industry said: "The news media is covering pop music more now, but progammers have not yet caught up." He added that the Channel 5 programme had huge potential because there was so little competition. "You can pick up good ratings from innovative pop music programming."

Although Channel 4 has had success with its music programme *The White Room*, as has BBC2 with *Later With Jools Holland*, there is no mainstream prime-time pop music competitor to *Top of the Pops*. Ms Airey said the new programme was likely to cover the album as well as the singles chart, and may also cover other charts, such as country and dance music.

"We are working on an innovative show. It will be different from *Top of the Pops* and will not be studio-based. But it will not be just pop videos linked by a voiceover," Ms Airey said. "Above all, it will run exclusives. For example, if the Spice Girls have a new video, we would want to show it first and then perhaps to do a background interview with them about the making of the video."

Privately, some music industry insiders are hoping that the threat of competition will be enough to persuade the BBC to return *Top of The Pops* to Thursday nights. "Friday night is the one night when our target audience is guaranteed not to be in. They are either out or getting ready to go out when *Top of the Pops* is on," one source said. "We have tried persuading the BBC to move it, but they seem to want to be pig-headed about it."

Pop reviews, page 22

Jimmy Savile introducing the first *Top of the Pops*, on New Year's Day, 1964

Zoe's body hidden in badger sett

The schoolgirl Zoe Evans was suffocated and her body concealed in a badger sett, an adjourned inquest was told. David Masters, the Wiltshire coroner, was told her body was found under bushes on Battlesbury Hill, close to her home in army married quarters at Warminster.

Zoe, 9, went missing on January 11. Her stepfather, Miles Evans, 28, a driver with the Royal Logistics Corps, is in custody charged with her murder.

Boxer accused

Herbie Hide, 25, the former WBO world heavyweight boxing champion, has been charged with two assaults causing actual bodily harm after an incident at a youth club in Norwich on Wednesday, police said.

Rape denied

Six army officers have denied raping a woman at a Wiltshire training college. Philip Bates, Ian Barlow, Matthew Tupling, Darren Bartlett, Andrew Stout and Nicholas Oettinger were given bail at Oxford Crown Court.

Shoe load stolen

Kickers shoes worth hundreds of thousands of pounds were stolen when a lorry driver was ambushed by four men after he stopped on the A34 near Kidlington, Oxfordshire. The driver was dumped near Bakewell, Derbyshire.

Weight of the law

An 18-stone policeman has been cleared of assaulting a prisoner who jeered about his size. PC Paul Brough, 47, had denied breaking Carl Hudson's nose at Wakefield police station. He was cleared by a jury at Leeds Crown Court.

Cat burglars

Nearly 1,000 cats' eyes worth £1,800 have been stolen shortly after they were fitted to a resurfaced road. Thieves took 90 minutes to remove the reflectors from the middle of the A75 near Kirkcowan, Dumfries and Galloway.

Inspector cleared

Raymond Hansen, 53, a 16 stone police inspector, was cleared at Southwark Crown Court of indecently assaulting a receptionist. He denied "gyrating" as he squeezed past her in the doorway of a police station.

Farrah's unstuck

A deal has been reached to continue Harrogate's 157-year-old toffee-making tradition after the manufacturers faced a financial crisis. Garry Marston has bought Farrah's Toffee, whose fans have included Queen Victoria.

Spielberg wins war of Herts and minds

By Dalya Alberge, Arts Correspondent

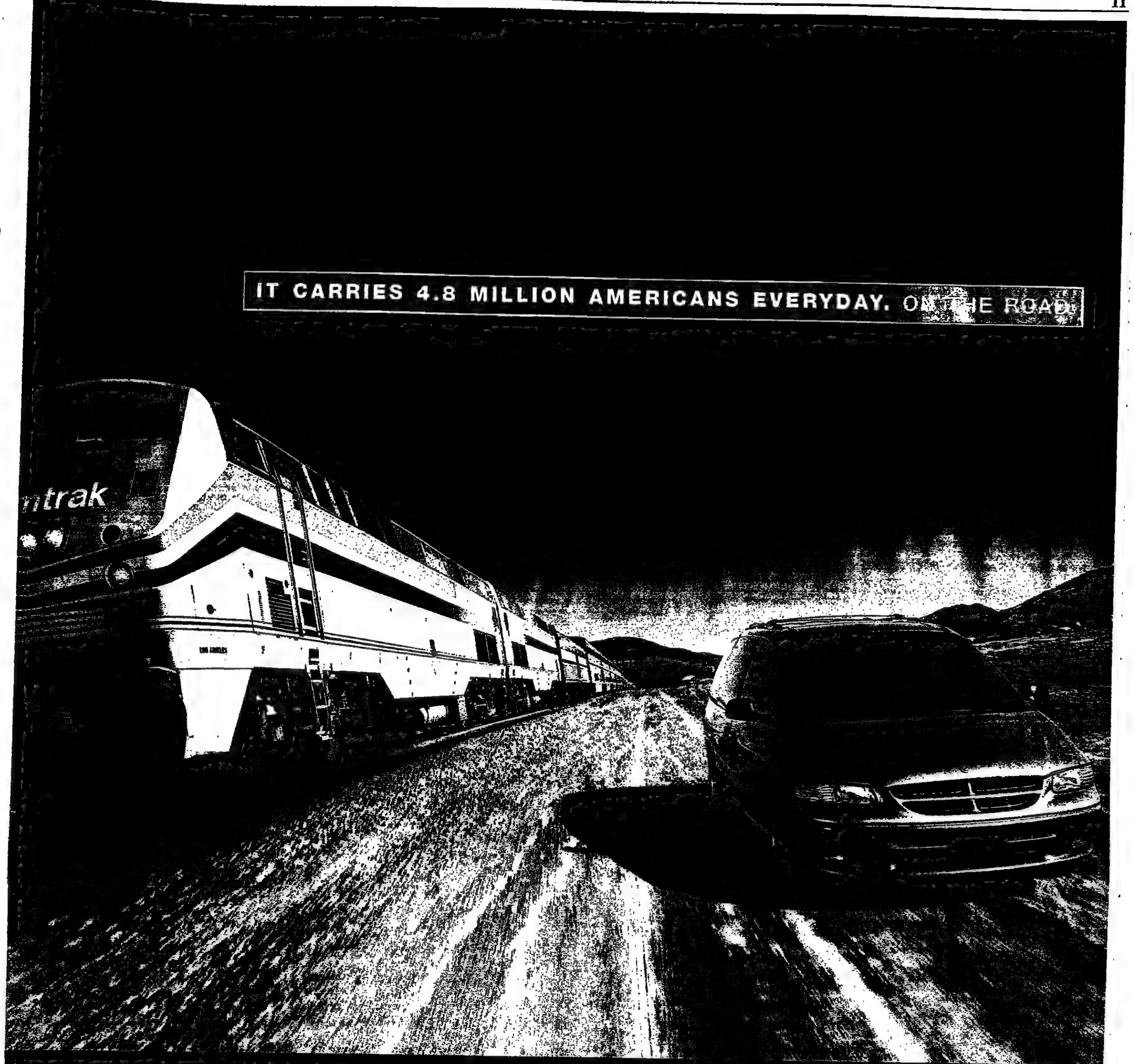
HOLLYWOOD is coming to Hatfield. Steven Spielberg is to make his next film, an epic story about the Second World War, on a former aerodrome in Hertfordshire. The D-Day landings will be shot on the beaches of Norfolk.

Planning permission was granted yesterday by Welwyn Hatfield Council for a French town — complete with a river and bridge — to be recreated for *Saving Private Ryan*. The film stars the Oscar-winning actor Tom Hanks as the leader of a commando unit. Work on the set has already begun and filming is scheduled for the summer.

The chairman of the council's planning committee, Stephen Ormrod, said: "This will provide a welcome boost for the local economy and put Hatfield back on the map. We are delighted that he has chosen Hatfield and want to do all we can to make sure everything goes well." Chris Holt, of Hertfordshire Film Link, contacted Spielberg's production company, DreamWorks, when he discovered that it had been spent nine months searching unsuccessfully for a location.

Commenting on why the film would not be made in France, he said it was cheaper to film in Britain. A spokesman for DreamWorks added: "The areas in France no longer look right. You cannot go to France in 1997 and find it looking as it did in 1944."

He said that the film was about "a mother who is about to be told that three of her four sons have been killed in action. The military decides it is too heavy a blow to give her while her fourth son is missing. In the wake of the Normandy invasion, six men risk their lives to find him. Tom Hanks is the leader of the party. It is based loosely on an incident which reportedly happened."



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TT3-97

Scientists to wave Union Jack with top 2,000 products

By Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor

A SCHEME to mark the millennium with 2,000 new British products has been given Government support. Launching a week of science, engineering and technology yesterday, Ian Taylor, the Science Minister, announced that the Government had allocated £3.33 million over the next four years to the Millennium Product Awards Scheme.

The idea, proposed by the Design Council, is to identify 2,000 outstanding products or services between now and 2000 and to display them as part of the Millennium Exhibition at Greenwich, southeast London.

"In this way Britain will send out a strong message to the world that we are, and will continue to be, a major industrial nation, able to create inspiring and commercially successful products and services," Mr Taylor said.

National Science Week — officially known as SET97 — will be bigger than ever this year, with some 6,000 events planned. It begins today and runs through next week.

The idea is to stimulate interest in science, technology and engineering and to show that they are relevant to people's daily lives. Schools, universities, museums, industrial companies, leisure and shopping centres and local and national government will contribute.

Today, for example, a 30ft-long model of a dinosaur will be assembled from "bones" made out of wood by Cambridge secondary school children. The stegosaurus will be assembled at Sedgwick Museum between 10am and 4.30pm as part of Cambridge University's contribution to SET97.

Cambridge is also staging a series of talks, open days and interactive events. These will address questions ranging from "Is the missing link still missing?" to "Why do cricket umpires sometimes make wrong decisions?" Scientists at the Natural History Museum in London will be available in its Central Hall today and tomorrow between 11am and 4pm to discuss their work.

Another main attraction is at the Old Royal Observatory in Greenwich, which is offering the first public opportunity for more than a decade to view the stars through Britain's largest refracting telescope.

The BBC Television programme *Tomorrow's World* has organised an exhibition at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham next Wednesday, and on Friday and Saturday Manchester University will host a Science Fair at which teams from schools will compete to represent Britain at an international fair in Kentucky in May.

☐ *Every area has locally organised events: details from the Science Line, 0345 600 444 (1pm-7pm weekdays), or on the Internet at www.britassoc.org.uk*

Lifesaver: contemporary drawing of Ablett's action

Memorial at last for hero who turned tide of history

By Robin Young

THE heroism of a Victoria Cross winner is to be honoured with a church memorial today, 100 years after his burial in an unmarked plot. The commemoration has been organised by a major who believes that Alfred Ablett may have changed history.

Ablett saved hundreds of lives in the Crimean War when he picked up a delay-fused Russian bomb and hurled it from an ammunition trench just before it exploded. He died in 1897 and was buried at St Andrew's Church in Weybread, Suffolk.

Major Frank Clark, chairman of the Suffolk branch of the Grenadier Guards Association, organised a memorial service to unveil a white marble plaque after researching Ablett's life for a book and finding no sign of his grave. He said: "If that bomb had exploded in the ammunition dump, it could have killed hundreds and held up the attack on Sebastopol. Other men might well have run like hell to get out of the way. Eventually the fall of Sebastopol led to the end of the Crimean War. The course of history could have been changed by Ablett's bravery."

Ablett: family could not afford headstone

Ablett, a brickmaker's son from Weybread, was a 26-year-old private in the 3rd battalion of the Grenadier Guards in 1855 when the British and French allies were attacking the Russian stronghold of Sebastopol. He was promoted to sergeant and awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Two years later, he was included among the first 62 recipients given the VC retrospectively when the award was inaugurated.

Ablett was invalided out of the Grenadier Guards in 1862, handicapped with acute rheumatism as a result of the frostbite and fever he suffered in the Crimea. He became a drill sergeant with the Norfolk Rifle Volunteers militia before moving to London, where he worked as a labourer and a hall porter at a gentlemen's club. He then served 26 years in the Millwall docks police force, rising again to the rank of sergeant. He married twice and had six children, all named after Crimea battles.

He died from a heart attack at the age of 67 and his body was taken by train to Weybread for the funeral on March 18, 1897. Although he was buried with military honours, his family could not afford a gravestone. His VC was sold by a descendant for £62 in 1900 and is now with his other medals in the Grenadier headquarters at Wellington Barracks, London.

Today's ceremony will be attended by Grenadier Guards and by at least 17 of Sergeant Ablett's descendants, including some great-great-great-grandchildren. Kathleen Acland, 64, of Hawkhurst, Kent, a great-granddaughter, said: "We are delighted that his bravery is being recognised."

Driver who killed TV actress gets 15 months

By A Staff Reporter

A SPEEDING motorist who hit and killed a teenage actress was jailed for 15 months at the Old Bailey yesterday.

Christine Strain, 15, who had appeared in *EastEnders*, was hit from behind at up to 55mph by Darren Rose, whose car was on the wrong side of the road after rounding a bend. She died of multiple injuries.

Rose, 24, of Forest Hill, southeast London, an administrative officer for Westminster council, was convicted last month of causing death by dangerous driving on November 4, 1995. He was also banned yesterday from driving for three years. As he was led away, relatives of the dead girl shouted: "Is this justice?"

Earlier, David Martin-Sperry, for the prosecution, said she was with two schoolfriends in Walworth, southeast London, when she was struck from behind by Rose's sports saloon. Rose "was quite simply on the wrong side of the road", and skid marks indicated he was doing at least 50mph in the 30mph limit zone.

Rose had said that it was an error of judgment on his part and that he did not spot the girls until the last moment.

BA creates 700 jobs in shift to Gatwick

By Harvey Elliott
Air Correspondent

MORE than 700 permanent jobs are to be created by British Airways at Gatwick by the summer to meet the surge in demand for scheduled business flights. The jobs include cabin crew, passenger services and ground staff. A further 200 temporary posts will be created. BA says that many could become permanent.

The airline is switching dozens of scheduled flights to the West Sussex airport because Heathrow, which handles 55 million passengers a year, is overcrowded. Next month it will fly to more destinations from Gatwick than it does from Heathrow. On Monday it transfers all its Latin American services — to Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Venezuela — to Gatwick. It is also introducing new services to Barcelona, Lisbon, Glasgow, Krakow, Riga, St Petersburg and Pisa.

The congestion at Heathrow is now being echoed at Gatwick, which handles 24 million passengers a year. Charter airlines are being urged to switch flights to Stansted, Essex, or other regional airports to enable scheduled services to grow.

MPs pledge fight to hold on to influence as activists vent frustration at ministerial gaffes

Tories press ahead with plans to widen leadership vote

BY JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Conservative Party is to press ahead with plans to change the rules for choosing its leader that would give party activists a vote for the first time.

The National Union Executive Committee, the voluntary wing of the party, has already circulated draft proposals to constituency chairmen under which ordinary members would have 20 per cent of the vote, with the rest going to MPs. The changes in party organisation, to be implemented after the general election, would be the most radical since Edward Heath won the leadership in 1965 in the first secret ballot of Tory MPs.

At present, only MPs can take part in leadership elections, but yesterday Robin Hodgson, chairman of the national union, told delegates at the Central Council meeting in Bath that he intended to put forward the proposals, which also include changes to increase the number of women MPs, after the election. During a private session at the meeting, Mr Hodgson gave a progress report on the changes, which have also been considered by Central Office, and signalled his determination to give activists a greater say in running the party.

He said that they could be in place by spring next year. Formal consultation would take place within the party after the election and the plans would then go to next year's Central Council for approval.

The rules would favour the present incumbent, although it is unlikely that John Major would be able to benefit from the changes if the Tories were badly defeated at the election. Most insiders expect a leadership contest in November if Labour sweeps to victory on May 1. Two separate options are now being put forward by the national union. Under the first, said to be supported by Mr Hodgson, an electoral college would be set up, with party activists immediately receiving 20 per cent of the vote.

A second option is initially to give the 200 members of the National Union Executive Committee a 20 per cent share of the vote. Once a register of party members had been set up, the scheme would transfer to the total membership.

Other proposals the national union will put forward include dividing would-be Tory candidates into A and B lists, with the latter restricted to applying for seats in their own regions. Under another plan, Conservative associations would have to surrender their exclusive right to choosing candidates by allowing Central Office to impose candidates, many of whom would be women, for interview.

MPs have already signalled that they will fight the proposals, which reduce their own influence, moth and nail. The Tory backbench 1922 Committee said earlier this year that the changes would never happen. But the plans are said to have the support of Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, even though relations between party headquarters and the grassroots have not been good in recent years.

Major hint on TV debate

JOHN MAJOR gave a strong indication yesterday that he was ready to face Tony Blair in a television debate (Philip Webster writes). In an interview with the *Western Daily Press*, he said it was a question of how the debate would be conducted by the media: "I believe they are discussing it with all the parties. I am happy for those discussions to go ahead."

Mr Major is opposed to a three-way debate, but accepts that some arrangement would be needed for the Liberal Democrats. One possiblity is a shorter, separate debate with Paddy Ashdown.

HUW EVANS

The Chancellor examining the new lightweight 50p at the Royal Mint yesterday

Brown wants to raise taxes in July, says Clarke

BY PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

KENNETH CLARKE gave warning yesterday of the "nightmare" of a tax-raising Labour Budget in July, as he derided Gordon Brown's claims that he could keep to his spending plans.

The Chancellor, speaking to the Conservative Central Council in Bath, was the first of several Cabinet ministers at the last big party gathering before the election openly to concede the possibility of a Labour government, in order to highlight the dangers it could present.

Deriding Mr Brown's claim that he could be as tough as Mr Clarke on spending, he said: "Gordon, you can put on a Liverpool football shirt if you want, but it won't make you Robbie Fowler. You can put on a mini-skirt, but it won't make you a Spice Girl." Referring to his favourite footwear, he added: "You can put on suede shoes, but it won't make you a successful Chancellor."

Mr Clarke asked how people could trust a party that planned a Budget within ten weeks of an election and yet would not give any details. He said the public should realise that, if it voted for Labour, it would not get Conservative policies.

There was no option marked "Tory policies, Labour men", he said. "If you vote Labour, you call a halt to tax-cutting, you vote for higher spending, you give more powers to the unions, you have a minimum wage, you join the social chapter and you stop privatisation." He said Mr Brown knew that he would have to introduce an emergency Budget because his figures did not add up. He would be told by the Treasury that, because of the lack of privatisation receipts, increase in local authority capital spending and other commitments, he would need an extra £12 billion over two years.

By having a swift Budget, Mr Brown intended to put the blame on the previous Government. "What does anyone imagine Tony Blair and Gordon Brown are promising a July Budget for? Do they want an emergency Budget to reduce taxes? To create incentives? To reward enterprise? You must be kidding. They need a July Budget to put taxes up. Not just the windfall tax — other taxes, too, to fill the £12 billion hole in their finances. Enough of this nightmare."

Mr Clarke was in equally bouyant mood as he toured the Royal Mint to watch the new lightweight 50p piece being made. He forecast that he would still have his job when the coin goes into circulation in September. "I intend to do my present job for many years to come," he said.

The Chancellor, who has the ancient title of Master of the Mint, said that he hoped the factory at Llantrisant, South Wales, would produce the euro coin, whether or not Britian used it.

Currie's warning over succession enrages party's foot soldiers

Currie said that factions were being formed

BY POLLY NEWTON

EDWINA CURRIE'S pronouncement yesterday that John Major should resign the party leadership quickly if he loses the general election was the last straw for Tory activists attending the Conservative Central Council.

The party's foot soldiers arriving in Bath were already furious over an interminable succession of ministerial gaffes when the former Health Minister told Radio 4's *The World at One* that it would be a disaster if Mr Major decided to stay on as Tory leader after an election defeat. The result would be prolonged strife in the party, Mrs Currie said, adding that factions backing potential leadership candidates were already forming.

Publicly, the Tory stalwarts in Bath claim they are confident of victory. They insist that, come polling day, the electorate will "come to its senses" and see off new Labour. Privately, most tell a different story. They believe that they are heading for defeat, and are prepared to speculate about the size of Labour's majority.

The more optimistic hope for a hung Parliament, possibly leading to another election within a year after Labour has had time to "show its true colours".

Most of the Tory activists do not hesitate when asked why they are facing defeat: after 18 years, people want a change. They blame a hostile media and the perversity of voters for the fact that they are not reaping the electoral rewards of economic sucesss. "If people choose to ignore the fact that they are doing well, there is not much we can do about it," said one.

But there is also frustration that the hard work of constituency activists is being undermined by infighting at Westminster.

Mrs Currie's comments provoked disbelief and fury. "She can go and boil her head," said one woman. "This is Edwina's latest piece of fiction," said another.

It is the latest in a series of incidents that have left many activists without hope that the Conservatives can present a united front in the run-up to the election. In recent weeks they have had to cope with Sir Edward Heath supporting devolution and a minimum wage, and Lord Tebbit describing Michael Heseltine's conduct as tacky and self-serving.

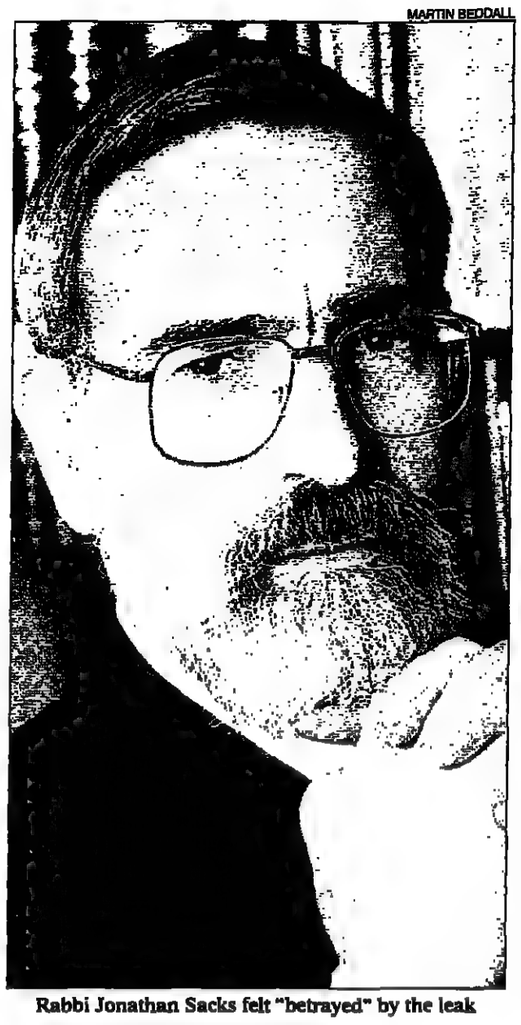
One constituency vice-chairman said: "We keep shooting ourselves in the foot . . . I'd like to tell them to get their act together."

Some believed that ruling out British membership of a single European currency "would help put clear blue water between us and Labour".

There was irritation at campaign tactics. "Why haven't we gone for Prescott more?" asked one activist. "We must concentrate on 'phoney Tony'," said another.

Confusion about the party's intended message was evident. One woman said that there was no point voting Labour if you wanted change because "they are just the same as the Conservatives now". She then claimed that, in power, Labour would revert to socialism.

Sacks calls for peace as Jewish schism widens


MARTIN BEDDALL

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks felt "betrayed" by the leak

■ **The simmering dispute between Reform and Orthodox Jews has erupted again over a leaked letter, Daniel McGrory reports**

THE Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, is calling on the Jewish community to end public bickering after the leaking of a letter in which he describes the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn, the leading reformist, as "one of those who destroys the faith".

Leaders of the Reform movement, however, appeared to reject Dr Sacks's appeal yesterday when they called on him to renounce his title and adopt the more limited one of Leader of Orthodox Jews. They blame the Chief Rabbi's remarks about Dr Gryn for much of the recent public rancour between members of the Orthodox and Reform traditions.

Dr Sacks said: "I am determined to put an end to attempts to disrupt our community." He set out a seven-point plan to stop Jews attacking and denigrating each other in public.

"Internal debates over issues such as Rabbi Gryn have been taken as an opportunity by Jews to attack other Jews in the public media. This has dismayed all Jews, particularly the young, and has tarnished our image in the eyes of the non-Jewish world. It must stop." He invites his rivals to join what he calls a "coalition for peace in the community".

Dr Gryn's widow, Jacqueline, said yesterday that she was "distressed beyond words" at the Chief Rabbi's description of her husband in the letter, which was leaked to the *Jewish Chronicle*.

She said: "My husband dedicated his life to the service of the Jewish people and humanity in general. He lived by the creed that we should fight for a society that is pluralistic and tolerant and which cherishes peace above all. This is a travesty of his vision and causes divisiveness in the entire Anglo-Jewish community, the last thing he would have wanted."

Writing in the *Jewish Chronicle* yesterday, Dr Sacks praises Dr Gryn as "a man of courage and deep humanity" and condemns the leaking of a private letter as a "scandalous betrayal". It was written to Dayan Chanoch Padwa, head of the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations. In it he says: "Only your Honour can know what conflict I experience in praising a person who is amongst those who destroy the faith." He says the Reform, Liberal and Masorti movements know "they have no enemy or opponent equal to the Chief Rabbi".

Rabbi Jonathan Romain, of the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, called on Dr Sacks to renounce his title, saying: "Today could signal a break between the Chief Rabbi and a sizeable percentage of British Jewry. Clearly, he no longer represents all Jews and speaks only for the Orthodox sector. He no more represents Reform and Liberal Jews than does the Archbishop of Canterbury represent Catholics and Methodists."

Rabbi Tony Bayfield, chief executive of the Reform Movement, said: "We are deeply distressed, most of all because of the pain it occasions the Gryn family and how it continues to drag the name of a great rabbi and a marvellous Jewish teacher through the mud. We are astonished and saddened by the language the Chief Rabbi uses. We were not aware that he was fighting a battle against us."

The Reform movement is still simmering from the strong emotions aroused when Dr Sacks failed to attend Dr Gryn's funeral last year. His decision to speak at a memorial meeting for Dr Gryn was condemned by ultra-Orthodox Jews, who feared his presence there would lend authority to the progressive movement.

Leading article, page 25


Jacqueline Gryn was "distressed" by the letter

Ancient Hebrew blamed for letter row

THE dispute was fuelled by the ancient Hebrew language used by the Chief Rabbi in his confidential letter. Supporters of the Reform movement were unhappy with the expressions Dr Sacks used when referring to the late Rabbi Gryn. The Chief Rabbi said that some of the misunderstanding was due to the archaic idioms of rabbinical Hebrew.

However, Rabbi Professor Dan Cohn-Sherbok said yesterday: "He was not simply trapped by the linguistic constraints of rabbinical Hebrew and could have expressed himself with more restraint if he had wanted."

Hebrew academics explained that rabbinical Hebrew developed out of and alongside biblical Hebrew. It utilises the vocabularly of biblical Hebrew but has expanded its range of words so that it is much more extensive. The syntax is substantially extended under the influence of Aramaic. Various grammatical features have been introduced into rabbinical Hebrew that are not present in the Hebrew Bible.

Dr Sacks says that rabbinical Hebrew uses hyperbole rather than understatement, which at times sounds archaic and in which some words or phrases — notably those such as "shame and falsehood" or "false grouping" — are idioms that cannot be translated in such a way fairly to reflect the far milder language that would have been employed in modern English.

Credo

Carnival holds a message of hope

Dan Cohn-Sherbok

Jews will soon celebrate the festival of Purim. This day of joy commemorates the triumph of the Jews over their foes in ancient times. As the Book of Esther recounts, King Ahasureus's chief minister, Haman, sought to destroy the Jewish people. Through the intervention of Esther, the King's consort, his plans were foiled.

In most congregations, Purim resembles a carnival, children frequently attending the reading from the Scroll of Esther in fancy dress and, whenever Haman's name is mentioned, worshippers stamp their feet and whirl noisemakers. Despite the merriment of the occasion, the story of Purim has deep significance for the Jewish people. Repeatedly in its history, Jewry has been persecuted and massacred. Yet, Phoenix-like, the Jewish community has arisen from the ashes of devastation to flourish once again.

The writings of Emil Fackenheim, the Jewish theologian, bear eloquent testimony to this quest for survival. In his view, God was with his people in the death camps, and out of the crematoria of Auschwitz issued a further commandment. This 614th commandment — added to the 613 in the Torah — is directed to the post-Holocaust Jewish community: Jews are forbidden to hand Hitler posthumous victories. They are commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. They are commanded to remember the victims of Auschwitz lest their memory perish. They are forbidden to despair of man and his world, and to escape into either cynicism or otherworldliness, lest they cooperate in delivering the world over to the forces of Auschwitz.

In our post-Holocaust world, the festival of Purim echoes this message of hope: the Book of Esther declares that God will not abandon his people. When Haman sought to wipe out the Jews, his plot was uncovered and the Jewish people were saved. And so it has been through the centuries. As God's suffering servant, we have been rejected, despised and led as a lamb to the slaughter. Yet, for nearly 4,000 years, our tiny nation has continued to exist.

Purim symbolises this fierce determination to survive against all odds. As Jewry stands on the threshold of the 21st century, Purim's message of hope should serve as its mainstay. Only in this way will the Jewish people, who have experienced the Valley of the Shadow of Death, be able to say in the ancient words of the Psalmist: "I shall fear no evil for thou art with me."

☐ *Rabbi Professor Dan Cohn-Sherbok teaches at the University of Kent, Canterbury, and is a Visiting Professor of Judaism at the University of Wales, Lampeter.*

هكذا من الاصل

Somerset House to open its doors as people's palace

By Carol Midgley

THE glories of Somerset House are to be opened to the public for the first time, more than two centuries after it was built as a virtual palace for Government departments.

Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, announced yesterday that the central London building would be fully restored and transformed into a centre for art and culture. The quadrangle — currently a Civil Service car park — and the magnificent 860ft South Terrace overlooking the Thames will be pedestrianised as a natural link between Covent Garden and the Embankment.

Much of the intricate architecture of Somerset House, which dominates the eastern part of the Strand, has been hidden from public view since it was built in the 1770s by Sir William Chambers as a classical Government building. It is home to the Inland Revenue and Lord Chancellor's department, and was best known for holding records of births and marriages.

Sir Tim Sainsbury, MP, chairman of a new independent trust which will lease the building, said: "Somerset House is one of the finest buildings in London, relatively unaltered with a magnificent river front, yet it is largely unseen. The courtyard is usually seen only if you walk across it to get your divorce."

The Royal Academy, the Royal Society, the Society of Antiquaries, the Poor Law Commissioners and the Seamen's Registry have all occupied its splendid rooms in the past 200 years. The Lord Chancellor's department will soon be relocated. The Inland Revenue, which today occupies the South block, is expected to remain.

Sir William Chambers: classical architect

Some rooms became accessible when the Courtauld Institute Galleries were installed in the Strand block in 1990. The rest of the building remains shut with many rooms lying empty.

Sir Tim said that plans were being considered to use the building for public functions and exhibitions. A restaurant may also be built. Work was unlikely to be completed before the end of the century. One of the first tasks of the Somerset House Trust will be to oversee the installation of the £75 million Gilbert Collection, donated to the nation by the multimillionaire Arthur Gilbert. It includes gold and silverware, Florentine mosaics made of natural and semi-precious stones, and Roman ornaments from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Trustees will include Sir Jeremy Isaacs, Sir David Rowland, Giles Worsley, author of *Perspectives on Architecture*, and Simon Jenkins of *The Times*, who has fought a long campaign to open Somerset House to the public.

A spokesman for the Heritage Department said: "The Somerset House Trust will take over from Government the overall responsibility for the whole of Somerset House. The trust would have as its objective the care and stewardship of the building, with a view to restoring it fully and turning part of the building into an improved centre for art and culture with greatly increased public access and use."

Closed to outsiders: early view of the building where even today "the courtyard is usually seen only if you walk across it to get your divorce"

Stepping into the open: the five-storey Navy staircase

Russian military alliance to check march of Taleban

BY CHRISTOPHER THOMAS, SOUTH ASIA CORRESPONDENT

RUSSIA and three frontline Central Asian states are planning to raise two armed divisions for deployment on the borders of Afghanistan.

It is the first official armed response by neighbouring countries to the apparently unstoppable march of the extremist Taleban Islamic militia, which has conquered three-quarters of Afghanistan.

The defence ministers of Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan met recently to discuss the threat of Islamic extremism spreading from Afghanistan. Central Asian countries have become directly involved in the Afghan civil war by supporting the last two big forces opposing Taleban, whose troops are expected to begin pushing into the north in the spring.

Tajikistan is assisting Ahmed Shah Masood, the Tajik militia leader who controls much of northeastern Afghanistan. Taleban has destroyed almost all his airbases and his fighter and transport planes are operating out of the Tajik city of Kulyab. This could provide a pretext for Taleban to enter Tajikistan.

Tajikistan is unlikely to have allowed General Masood to use its territory without Moscow's agreement. Russia is supplying weaponry to General Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek leader of northern Afghanistan. Iran, an opponent of the mainly Sunni Taleban, supports General Dostum financially.

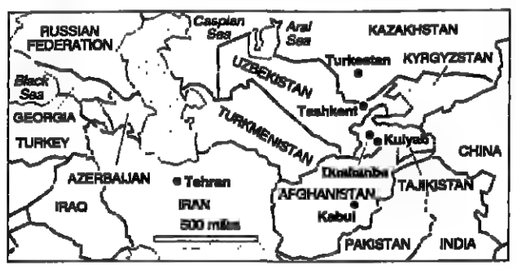
India provides material support to the ousted government of President Rabbanni and General Masood. Delhi is worried that Taleban might become directly involved in Muslim Kashmir. Separatist Kashmiri terrorists have received training in Afghanistan and Afghan gunmen have been captured in Kashmir.

Uzbekistan has sealed its border with Afghanistan, fearing a tide of up to 500,000 refugees if Taleban attacks the north. Tajikistan has said it will not allow Afghan refugees into its territory.

Uzbekistan is already threatened by Islamic extremism, which would be bolstered by the arrival of Taleban on the Afghan border. All the Central Asian states could be destabilised by its proximity, leading to greater military involvement by Russia.

Russia and the former Soviet states — excluding Turkmenistan, which is neutral — may expand their collective security pact to establish a military coalition designed specifically to repulse any armed threat by Taleban, which is funded by Saudi Arabia and supported by Pakistan.

The United States quietly backs Taleban, although there is no evidence of direct support. This is not the first time it has backed Islamic extremists: it funded the Mujahidin war against the former Soviet Union and is now hoping Taleban will impose peace on the country so US companies can gain economic access to Central Asia. The regional impact of a Taleban victory, however, could be devastating, stretching from Xinjiang in China's extreme north west to the Black Sea.



☐ **Beijing:** President Jiang Zemin of China is to visit Moscow next month to sign a pact to reduce troops along its border with Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Regional peace could lead to China's annual trade with Russia doubling by the end of the century from about £6 billion this year. *(Reuter)*

GARY CAMERON / REUTER

An injured President Clinton is carried to Air Force One yesterday at Palm Beach international airport

Clinton's golf handicap suffers in fall

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

HOPES of a weekend spree with his golfing hero were shattered for President Clinton last night after he tore a tendon at Greg Norman's Florida estate, was taken to Washington for surgery and faced the prospect of weeks on crutches.

After regaling his host with golfing stories into the early hours, the President slipped on irregular steps leading to his guest cottage and tore the quadriceps tendon in his right knee.

"He remembers his right leg buckling out, he heard a loud pop and a shooting pain." Captain Connie Mariano, the presidential physician, said. He stayed overnight in a West Palm Beach hospital before being flown in Air Force One to Bethesda Naval Hospital, where he was being operated on yesterday.

Although the accident was certain to complicate Mr Clinton's schedule for a few days, it was not expected to affect either the planned summit with President Yeltsin in Finland next week or his wife's trip to Africa today. Despite speculation in America about the President's ability to continue his official duties, his fall did little more than ruin a long-planned weekend away from the fundraising controversies of Washington.

He was expected to be given an epidural injection yesterday before doctors drilled two holes in his knee to re-attach the tendon. Asked before leaving Florida whether he would be fit enough for the Helsinki summit, Mr Clinton replied: "You bet."

The President had been planning his sojourn at Mr Norman's Tranquillity estate for weeks. Hillary Clinton, who had already planned her own trip abroad, was said to have given her husband the green light and his press aides had described the President as "rhapsodic" at the prospect.

Since playing golf with Mr Norman in Australia last year, the two men are said to have become firm friends. On his arrival in Florida, the presidential helicopter landed on a fairway and Mr Clinton practised some shots with a set of Cobra irons, a recent present from the golfer.

He had been due to play in a two-day tournament at the Medallist course owned by Mr Norman, where the initiation fee is $75,000 (£47,000).

Congressman calls for impeachment inquiries over Democrats' funding

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

A REPUBLICAN member of Congress has asked for impeachment inquiries to be opened against President Clinton and Al Gore, the Vice-President, over the Democrats' fundraising abuses.

The request was made in a letter from Bob Barr of Georgia, a strong conservative, to Henry Hyde, chairman of the House judiciary committee. Mr Hyde said yesterday that he was reviewing the letter and would respond to Mr Barr's request in due course. In other words, impeachment is still merely being floated on Capitol Hill and Republicans will wait to see if the idea gains momentum. Several congressional sources felt it was premature to consider an impeachment inquiry until results were known from four other investigations.

In another move against the President, Republicans on both the House and Senate judiciary committees asked Janet Reno, his Attorney-General, to appoint an independent counsel to investigate allegations of illegal fundraising during Mr Clinton's re-election campaign. If Miss Reno still insists that there is no need, she must give her reasons to the two committees.

Impeachment would be a very serious step leading to a trial by the Senate and, upon conviction by a two-thirds majority, removal from office. A decision by the judiciary committee to refer three articles of impeachment to the full Congress in 1974 finally forced Richard Nixon to resign over Watergate. The Constitution says "treason, bribery and other high crimes and misdemeanours" are grounds for impeachment. The fundraising issue has included allegations that national security interests were compromised and foreign powers, notably China, tried to buy influence over foreign-policy decisions.

WORLD SUMMARY

Britons on barge released

Paris: Twenty foreign oil workers, including three Britons, held hostage on a barge in Nigeria by jobless tribesmen were freed without violence after the Nigerian Navy boarded the craft off the town of Warri on Thursday (Ben Macintyre writes).

The French oil contractor ETPM, which owns the vessel, said that the barge's 90 passengers, who included 16 Frenchmen, three British divers and an American, were unharmed.

Cost of news

New York: A record 185 journalists were in prison in 24 countries last year, with 78 of them in Turkish jails alone, the Committee to Protect Journalists, said in its annual report. Twenty-seven journalists were killed in the line of duty, 26 of whom were murdered. *(Reuter)*

Duke's rebuke

Tokyo: The Duke of Edinburgh chided Japan for its niggardly contribution to global conservation and said the country ought to make a greater effort to protect the environment (Robert Whymant writes). He is on a visit as president emeritus of the World Wide Fund for Nature.

Cosby charge

Mikail Markhasev, 18, a Russian émigré, was charged with the murder of Ennis Cosby, only son of Bill Cosby, the American comic actor (Quentin Letts writes). He was arrested in Los Angeles this week after an informer contacted a newspaper, hoping to claim a £63,000 reward.

Comoros revolt

Moroni: Secessionists on Anjouan island in the Comoros stormed the airport, grounding an aircraft, on the third day of a general strike which is rapidly turning into open rebellion. *(Reuter)*

Lebed says strikes could drag nation into new civil war

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

ALEKSANDR LEBED, Russia's general turned presidential hopeful, said yesterday that growing discontent throughout the nation threatened to plunge the country into Albanian-style anarchy.

In a solemn speech to supporters of his newly founded political party, the popular former paratrooper predicted that nationwide strikes planned for this month could trigger a new civil war. "March 27 could mark a decisive stage in the crisis of the powers that be, with a move to chaos and anarchy in the country," he said at the Russian Popular Republican Party's opening congress.

The Afghan war veteran said that in the present climate of public dissatisfaction with the Government's disastrous social policies and its failure to pay wages and pensions, one spark could ignite outright revolt. "One victim and that is it," he said. "The authorities have their hands free to introduce a state of emergency and it is already the first step towards a suicidal civil war. We would win it, but we do not need this kind of war.

"Let little Albania become an example to us, to huge Russia," he said. "The President ran off in some unknown direction, the army declares its neutrality. It would not declare its neutrality here."

The general gave a warning about the threat of mutiny in the armed forces last year, but his predictions failed to materialise. Critics argued that his alarmist speech yesterday was a desperate attempt to maintain his public profile. The former national security adviser, who was dismissed last year by President Yeltsin for insubordination, has been eclipsed by the Russian leader, who appears to have returned to full-time work.

At a press conference after the speech, however, General Lebed dismissed the Kremlin leader's return to work as a "swan song" and said flatly that the Russian Government would fall apart this year. "Government will simply collapse," he said. "It will collapse just as its [Soviet] predecessors collapsed in 1991. This is inevitable. This will happen in 1997. We see our main task in preventing the dead from clutching the living. We must be ready to grasp power as it collapses."

While some dismiss this scenario as wishful thinking, General Lebed's apocalyptic predictions may prove prophetic. Despite Mr Yeltsin's new-found vigour, an Australian diplomatic report published yesterday in *The Sydney Morning Herald* said that the Russian leader has Parkinson's disease. The report quoted the remarks of Li Peng, the Chinese Prime Minister, who apparently "mimicked" the Russian leader's shaky condition after a meeting in December. Mr Li told his ambassador, who shared his observations with other Asian envoys.

In addition to the fresh health concerns, there is increasing frustration in the armed forces over the failure of the authorities to pay wages and provide basic living standards. There is also growing anger among those millions of workers and pensioners who have gone for months without their pay.

Yesterday Mr Yeltsin promised that under a new streamlined Cabinet, the Government would have "new, fresh ideas". Critics, however, say that most of the main figures from the last Government will still hold office.

Moscow is attacked for seizing Polish ship

FROM PATRICIA KOZA IN WARSAW

A POLISH minister yesterday accused Russia of using brute force in seizing a fishing trawler. Boguslaw Liberadzki, the Transport Minister, described the act as more serious than Moscow's threats to invade the country and quash the independent Solidarity Union in the 1980s.

"It's too far to send a gunboat," Mr Liberadzki said of Polish diplomatic efforts to free the *Aquarius* and its 79-member crew. The trawler was boarded by members of the Russian Federal Coast Guard in the Sea of Okhotsk late last month and escorted to Petropavlovsk on the Kamchatka peninsula. Although Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Russian Prime Minister, ordered that the crew be released, Poland says the boat and crew are still in custody.

Mr Liberadzki said the Russians used rifle butts to subdue the crew, and had prevented them from using the ship's radio to contact its owner in Szczecin. "In the 1980s they threatened to use force against Poland [during the rise of Solidarity]," he said of Moscow. "Now they've done it."

The Foreign Ministry said a diplomatic team has been working non-stop to resolve the issue. Poland has filed a protest and Leszek Miller, the Interior Minister, has already made one trip to Moscow.

Moscow has accused the trawler of fishing in a forbidden area, but a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Poland is "absolutely sure" no laws or treaties were violated.

A senior government official who requested anonymity said the incident reflects the turmoil within Russia, where Mr Chernomyrdin is attempting to form a new government.

Mr Liberadzki, however, suggested that the incident may be an attempt to provoke Poland into retaliating, so that Moscow could cast Warsaw in a bad light in forthcoming negotiations on the latter's application to join Nato.

☐ **Gdansk protest:** About 2,000 workers from the bankrupt Gdansk shipyard marched on the Mayor's office in a third day of protests at the closing of the yard.

ROSS LAND / AP

Peter Blake, leader of the New Zealand yachting team, holders of the America's Cup, inspects damage done to the trophy yesterday after a Maori independence activist wielding a sledgehammer attacked it at the Auckland headquarters of the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron. The attack left the Victorian trophy with a squashed and dented middle section and a bent spout (Patrick Smellie in Wellington writes). The cup was locked in a bank vault while arrangements were being made to ship it to its original manufacturers, the London silversmiths Garrards. Last night the firm said it would be "an honour" to restore the trophy.

Assault on yacht trophy

Zairean conflict endangers rhinos

FROM DAVID ORR IN NAIROBI

THE northern white rhino of Africa is probably the rarest large mammal on earth. Hunted to the brink of extinction for its horn, it now faces a new and potentially lethal danger: civil war.

Its only habitat, Garamba National Park, in northern Zaire, has been occupied in turn by the warring sides, leaving conservationists unable to continue their work.

At the forefront of attempts to save this rare animal is the British branch of the World Wide Fund for Nature. Garamba is now part of a vast swath of Zairean territory held by rebels of the Democratic Alliance for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, who are trying to overthrow President Mobutu.

"It's not so much that the rebels themselves pose a danger to the rhinos," said Fraser Smith, the Briton in charge of the WWF's Garamba project. "But, because the patrolling and monitoring have been disrupted, we can't protect the animals from poachers. I'm really concerned for the rhinos' safety now".

No more than 31 northern white rhinos live in the wild, all at Garamba, although there are nine in zoos in California and the Czech Republic. Since five rhinos have not been seen within the last six months, the total could be as low as 26. According to one assessment, between two and four animals will be poached this year if the necessary support is not provided.

There has been no effective management of the park, an area about the size of Northumberland, since December. The Zairean Army occupied the park in January and rebels set up a base there last month. Among the conservation measures most affected will be a programme to implant radio transmitters in the rhinos' horns.

'Words of Christ' are found

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

SCRAPS of papyrus which may carry previously unknown utterances by Jesus Christ caused controversy in Berlin yesterday.

The claim has been made by two American professors, Paul Mirecki of the University of Kansas and Charles Hedrich of Missouri, who say they have literally pieced together some Coptic texts which add up to a lost gospel.

"Jesus wanted to be crucified; he was waiting impatiently for the cross," says Professor Hedrich on the basis of one of the pieces of text which are supposed to depict a conversation between Christ after his resurrection and a disciple. The papyrus fragments found in the Egyptian Museum of Berlin — there are two big chunks and about 30 scraps the size of a postage stamp — are said to be from the fourth or fifth centuries. The Coptic text may date from an earlier time. The researchers see similarities with the *Apocrypha*, which has not been integrated into the main biblical canon. The texts were plainly compiled by gnostics who flourished in the eastern Mediterranean between the second and third centuries.

A scrap of the Coptic text

One fragment quotes Jesus as saying: "He who is close to me is close to the fire. He who is far from me is far from life." Another scrap quotes him as saying: "Knowledge and not faith leads to salvation."

The gnostic use of the word "knowledge" was different from present usage, says Rainer Kampling, a Catholic scholar of Berlin's Free University. "For them, knowledge was the secret, mystical teaching of the initiated." He says the scraps do not comprise a lost gospel. Other sceptics cast doubt on the discovery.

Western refugees evacuated to Italy after terrifying car journey through rebel roadblocks to port

British aid worker tells of escape from armed Tirana mob

By Stephen Farrell and Richard Owen in Brindisi

AN AID worker who stood up to an armed Albanian mob breaking into his supply warehouse was among 120 Britons evacuated by boat from Durres yesterday.

Sean Robinson, 29, a Seventh Day Adventist minister working for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (Adra), hid the charity's two four-wheel-drive vehicles before opening the doors. He then fled and was spirited to the British Embassy by friendly locals as the mob stripped the warehouse clean.

Mr Robinson, from Kenilworth, Warwickshire, told his fiancee Catherine Korzyniowski, 21, of his ordeal by mobile phone from the embassy compound. His father Brian, also a minister, later recognised him from a picture of evacuees in *The Times*.

Mr Robinson, 54, said last night that his son told him: "At 10.45am a mob came to the [Tirana] compound and ripped the gates off the compound wall, waving their guns. Sean had the presence of mind to go out and tell them they didn't have to tear the place apart because he had opened the warehouse doors. They went in and stripped the place bare. However, he had already salted away a lot of the more valuable stuff. He called us from the embassy and again on the the way to Durres, where he spent hours sitting on the beach overnight waiting for the Italian boats to come in and get him." The warehouse had held about £150,000 of food and materials.

The British refugees' journey to Durres was hair-raising as the convoy of their cars was repeatedly held up before reaching the port, where the vehicles were immediately stolen. The refugees, who included 11 Commonwealth citizens (including Australians and Canadians) as well as three Irish nationals, were forced to spend Thursday night on the beach in bitterly cold conditions as gunfire resounded from the port area where hundreds of armed Albanians tried to storm the last Italian ferries leaving for Brindisi and Bari. British consul officials said British refugees boarded the Italian warship *San Giusto* by landing craft at dawn yesterday. The *San Guisto*, an 8,000 ton anti-submarine vessel, headed for Brindisi carrying nearly 1,000 passengers, including Italians and Albanians as well as the British and Commonwealth party.

> ❛ A mob came and ripped the gates off the compound wall, waving their guns ❜

About 50 British citizens in Albania failed to make the deadline for the evacuation. British military officials said the destroyer *HMS Birmingham* was now moored off Durres to help with a second evacuation operation. *HMS Exeter* is also nearby in Adriatic waters, and three RAF Hercules are on standby at the military airfield of Gioia del Colle in southern Italy. There were unconfirmed reports yesterday that American forces were making an attempt to secure Tirana airport so that transport planes and helicopters could fly in to help with further evacuations.

At the port of Brindisi yesterday Italian military helicopters and US Chinooks were kept busy ferrying some of the 2,000 American evacuees from Tirana off the *USS Nassau*. The vessel had evacuated Americans from the Albanian coast in an operation similar to that mounted by the *San Giusto*.

Captain Angelo Agliatta, the port commander, said "half the Albanian Navy" had arrived in Brindisi in the past 48 hours. Among them were a patrol boat, four launches, two minesweepers, several torpedo boats and two rusting and battered corvettes, with their guns covered in tarpaulin. In addition to the vessels, he said 100 Albanian military personnel had defected in helicopters.

Among the Albanians who fled to Italy yesterday was General Safet Zhulali, a former Defence Minister. He travelled across the Adriatic with his family on a merchant ship.

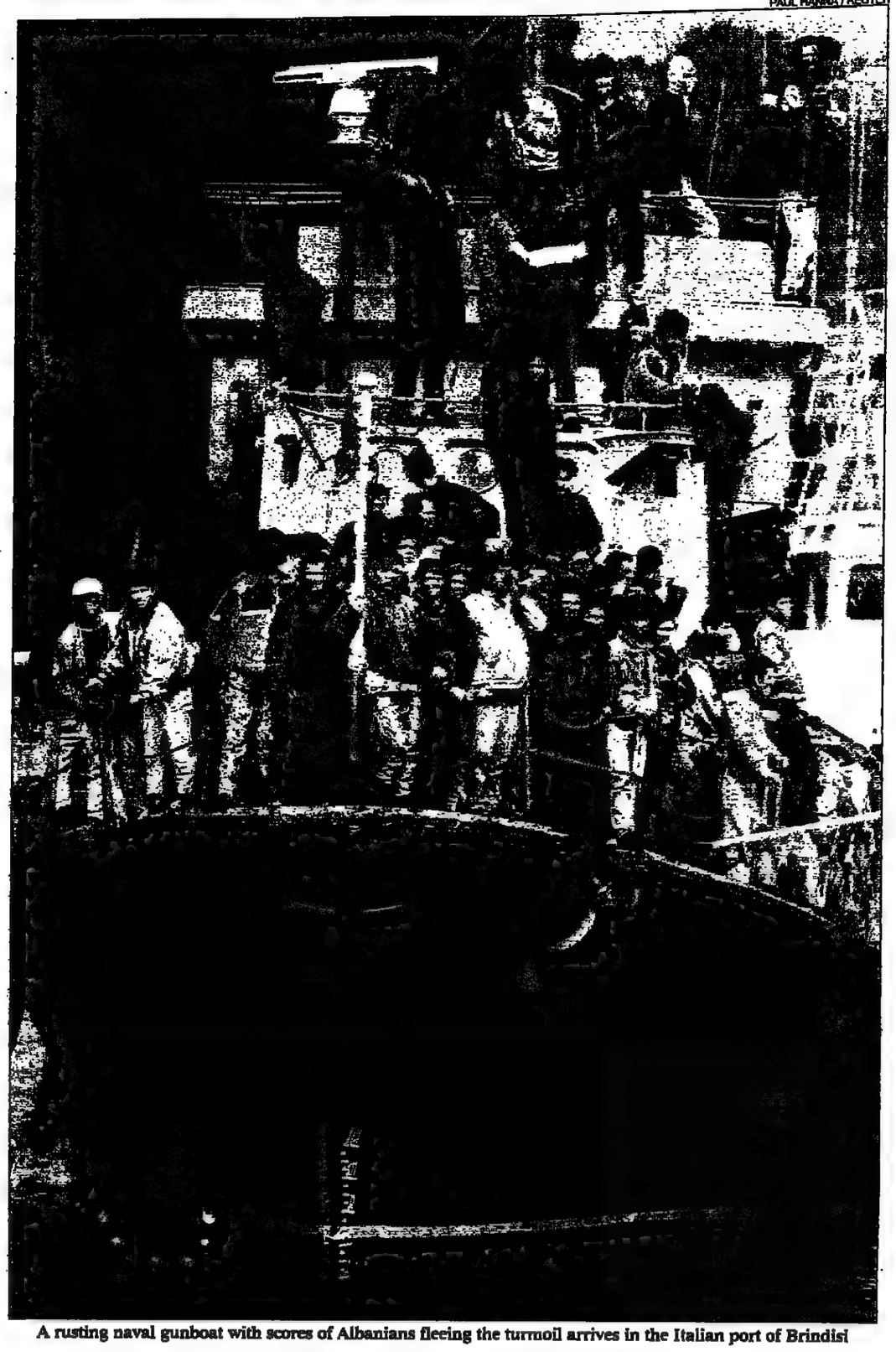
'King' ready to return

Johannesburg: King Leka of Albania is poised to return to his troubled homeland from his South African exile in an attempt to end the civil unrest (Inigo Gilmore writes).

The 57-year-old pretender to the throne left his Johannesburg home on Thursday for a European destination where he says he will await a call from his people. Encouraged by news that President Berisha had agreed to call early elections, the self-styled king, who was two days old when his father, King Zog, fled into exile, says he is the only person able to unify Albania.

King Leka: awaits call from Albanian people

PAUL HANNA / REUTER



A rusting naval gunboat with scores of Albanians fleeing the turmoil arrives in the Italian port of Brindisi

Berisha's fall vital to end the anarchy

By James Pettifer

IF TODAY'S events in Tirana were part of a play, President Berisha should soon disappear, or fall on his sword. His children have fled, his allies from overseas have deserted him and the mob is at the gates.

But as at the end of Hamlet, the tough Fortinbras-type ex-generals and colonels in their southern mountain towns are watching and waiting. Once everything movable has been stolen, someone, sooner or later, has to restore order, and the southern generals look the most likely candidates.

Neither that, nor any other solution, can happen while Mr Berisha is in situ, and anarchy will reign. The message has to get through that he is now the main obstacle to a reasonably peaceful resolution.

The President is the only factor uniting the opposition. Without Mr Berisha, they are likely to lose momentum and political and clan differences will emerge. If he goes, after the inevitable wild and dangerous party to celebrate, everyone will have to go home.

For this is a classic Balkan spring rising, it cannot continue indefinitely: the fields have to be cultivated and jobs in Greece or Italy have to be found to get families through the next winter.

A sensible Western policy would be to accept this highly imperfect reality, engineer a dignified removal for Mr Berisha before it is too late, let his entourage disappear as best they can and hope everyone gets tired quickly. There are signs of this already in some southern towns such as Sarande.

☐ **Rome:** Italy was embarrassed yesterday that the country had awarded its highest honour to President Berisha (John Phillips writes).

The Knight of the Grand Cross with the Decoration of the Great Cord was awarded by President Scalfaro last April when he went on a state visit to Tirana. Red tape had held up the award, which was only officially conferred on Mr Berisha yesterday.

Frenzy of looting and gunfire as desperate civilians 'take back what the Government has stolen'

Foreigners flee vision of Dante in shattered capital

Tom Walker in Durres watches a sky filled with helicopters ferrying terrified foreigners out of Albania

AS IT closed its doors to the world, ungovernable Albania yesterday melted into a frenzy of shooting, looting and inexplicable motorcades.

Most Westerners had already had their fill, and chose to board what amounted to a military shuttle helicopter service between Tirana and a US warship, *USS Nassau*, in the Adriatic.

Italians and Americans left in twin-rotor Chinook helicopters from the national stadium behind a presidential palace that might or might not have contained a President. The British and Greeks took their nationals out by road and boat, running the gauntlet of roadblocks and edgy policemen with an alarming habit of simultaneously gesticulating and shooting.

As more than 120 non-essential American Embassy staff took to the skies, the American Ambassador, Marisa Lino, assured Albanians on state television that they were not being abandoned.

Durres, the port of departure for those fleeing Albania's social catastrophe, was a vision from Dante. A people not noted for their industry descended on the quayside government warehouses en masse, and picked them bare. Lorries, donkeys, horses, bicycles, mopeds, wheelbarrows: no mode of transport was ignored in a frenzy of looting. The kings of the rampage were the truck gangs, comprising Kalashnikov-toting youths in bandanas and balaclavas, letting off warning volleys as they marked out their territories for pillage. The pitted road alongside the derricks and smashed security fences was clogged with the young and the old, men, women and children alike. They carted, cycled and humped away iron rods, sacks of cement, furniture, books, lamps, tools, batteries, webbing — anything not anchored to the ground or walls went amid the rising dust and din of gunfire.

"It is a bad situation," admitted Dash Jarvet, 53, a school director, his bicycle burdened with five carrier bags full of books. "But the Government stole from the people and now the people are stealing back." In his hand he clutched *Vilet e Zemerimit* — the Albanian translation of *The Grapes of Wrath*. "We have taken those that we think are good," he explained. "My school needs all these things." Others preferred to stay indoors, well away from the Balkan macho displays of firepower.

"It is terrible, they are shooting all night and all day," said Doriana Nikolla, 20. "We don't have anything to eat — all the shops are closed and the ones that open are immediately looted by armed men." Her cousin, Genti Robja, a physics teacher from Elbasan, pleaded with visiting journalists to stay. "Please do not go, foreigners are like gods to us here. If only Nato would intervene for two days everything would be under control and the people would give the guns back."

Silhouetted against the horizon, too far to be of much comfort, were the warships of the Italian Navy, where Albania's future was being discussed by members of a new Government impotent to end the chaos onshore. Despite the heat, many Albanians in Durres wore jackets and coats, insisting they would jump aboard any ship that came into port.

The road from the port, past the summer palace of King Zog, was littered with spilled merchandise, broken lorries and dead donkeys and dogs. The looting epidemic was less frenzied in the capital, but a half-built private housing estate on the edge of Tirana provided rich pickings. A billboard described it as "The Prime Neighbourhood with Comfort," but by the end of the afternoon there was little left.

Most of Tirana's shops were hastily emptied of their contents by worried owners and shuttered.

"We want to save our heads and what we own," said Alfred Maloska as he loaded handbags into a trailer behind his Mercedes. Further clouding the confused issue of authority in the capital, a motorcade of armoured personnel carriers, Mercedes and Romanian Jeeps crawled around the city centre in the late afternoon.

Plainclothes thugs popped out of turrets and sunroofs, firing deafening rounds of automatic fire over the international hotels and the television station.

Hospitals in the capital reported at least 16 dead in the past 24 hours and some 140 wounded, nearly all in shooting accidents. "I shot my best friend in the head," sobbed one man outside a casualty unit.

Various theories began to take shape over who is organising the distribution of weapons, with reports coming in from several areas of the city suggesting that ruling Democratic Party activists are recruiting armed militia units to defend the President.

Along more conventional lines of reasserting order, state television appealed to the police and army to put their uniforms on again and return to the streets, promising their salaries would be trebled.

Foreigners having trouble identifying who is who in the Albanian security services could take solace in the presence of 150 American Marines "in theatre".

There were also rumours of an SAS unit in the basement of the British Embassy.

ERIC CABANIS / EPA

An Albanian family hoping to be evacuated runs towards a French Army helicopter about to take off from Durres with French nationals on board

Chaos is the only order as mobs turn to plunder

FROM ANTHONY LOYD IN TIRANA

THIS is anarchy in its purest form. Burning houses; masked gunmen; streams of refugees; US Cobra gunships clattering overhead.

Tirana is imploding. Battle is confusing, but still has some basic parameters. Struggling policemen hold the capital's centre against the mobs, exchanging fire with increasing frequency as gangs push for plunder.

A thin line of nervous conscripts and Shik secret police have cordoned off the presidential quarters. Nobody knows whether President Berisha is still inside. Rumours are rife that he had fled the country were denied and, at an emergency meeting, he is reported to have declared resolutely: "I no longer have an army or a police force, but Albania still has a President."

No renegade group seems to have the same agenda. Some have taken up arms in support of Berisha, some in support of the rebels; others to loot, others for their own protection.

On Thursday night Fier, 40 miles south of Tirana, was the last bastion of government support. By dawn, it had fallen, becoming a fiefdom loyal to no-one but itself. We left its derelict streets at dawn, jumping aboard an empty bus whose driver was trying to get back to his family in Tirana. Tanks rolled out of looted army bases as we neared the port of Durres, its harbour already choked by a flotilla of small boats as refugees struggled to escape to Italy. Defecting conscripts jumped aboard the bus, pale with fear, joined soon by injured insurgents and wounded children. Twice we stopped at medical centres: twice the bloody casualties were turned away by doctors who no longer had the equipment to treat them.

The suburbs of Tirana seemed to have been taken over by the escaped inmates of a lunatic asylum. Drunken gangs laden with firepower, their faces hidden by ski-masks and balaclavas, orchestrated looting from homes and government buildings.

Children leapt from the breached doorway of a sports shop. Beside them gunmen fired at two US Cobra helicopters taking part in the evacuation of the US Embassy.

As the gunfire nears the presidential building it seems impossible that Mr Berisha could survive the next 24 hours.

TELEPHONE

The Foreign Office has set up a telephone line for people worried about relatives in Albania. The number is: 0171 839 5656.

Netanyahu joins grieving families at schoolgirls' funeral

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

FOR the second time in six weeks Israel was yesterday plunged into national mourning as more young Jews were buried amid scenes of private grief and public declarations of resoluteness in the face of Arab hostility.

This time the dead were schoolgirls murdered by a soldier firing along the normally tranquil border with Jordan. Last month it was 73 young soldiers killed in a mid-air helicopter crash as they flew towards the so-called security zone in southern Lebanon.

The funerals took place in the working-class town of Beit Shemesh, 16 miles from Jerusalem, under cover of darkness. At the cemetery packed with thousands of mourners in a community that is small enough to resemble an extended family, mothers' screams tore through the night air. It was hard to imagine how the bereaved will greet King Hussein of Jordan if, as expected, he arrives next week to pay his condolences.

At the nearby school from which all the victims came, there was frustration with the inability of the peace process to end violence and bewilderment that seven lively classmates, who had set out on a field trip to the Hill of Peace with their lunch boxes, never returned.

"This peace is not real, and there will not ever be peace," Ehud Amitai, 17, said. "The Arabs do not want peace, they want the whole country."

In the entrance hall, students arranged memorial candles in the shape of a "7". There was friction between some of the family mourners and the official government party led by Binyamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister. "Who asked him to come here," Hazi, the father of Keren Cohen, demanded.

In his eulogy, Mr Netanyahu struck the note of firmness for which many in Beit Shemesh and other working-class areas like it voted for him last May. "These girls were murdered due to one reason: because they were girls who belonged to the Jewish people, because of the horrible hatred against which we are struggling with determination," the Prime Minister told the crowd, many of whom were in tears.

Lightning flashed as four burial shrouds were lowered into their graves. Some relatives fainted and mourners cried out as Mr Netanyahu and the other dignitaries read out the names."I want her back," the mother of one of the girls shouted as Mr Netanyahu was speaking.

"All the buses that left Beit Shemesh were full of the joy of life. They came back filled with despair and mourning," Zevulun Hammer, the Education Minister, said. "It was not a school trip, it was the final path. The River Jordan is red with their innocent blood."

DAOUD MIZRAHI / EPA

Mr Netanyahu, top centre, watches as one of the girls shot on the Hill of Peace is buried

Israeli Cabinet votes to press on with settlement

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER

THE Israeli Cabinet yesterday decided unanimously to defy world opinion and respond to the girls' massacre by starting work early next week on a massive new settlement for 32,000 Jews in occupied east Jerusalem.

The decision to send the bulldozers to the pine-covered hill known as Har Homa, which Israel's internal security chiefs acknowledge will lead to serious violence with the Palestinians, was taken at a six-hour session of the right-wing Cabinet.

Israel radio said there were no dissenting voices against the decision to start the building, despite the UN General Assembly vote by 130 to two, with two abstentions, calling on Israel to abandon the planned settlement, which will be constructed on land conquered from Jordan in 1967.

The Cabinet session began with a minute's silence for the seven Jewish girls aged 12 and 13 who were shot dead by a Jordanian soldier as they were on a school trip to a piece of border territory handed back to Jordan in the 1994 peace treaty. By the blackest of ironies, the site is named "The Hill of Peace".

Interrogation of the gunman, Ahmed Mousa, an army driver variously described as in his mid twenties or early thirties, was continuing in Jordan, where his father and mother said that he had psychological problems.

Israeli officials were keeping an open mind on the causes and motives of the tragedy, noting that the gunman's mother had accompanied her claim of insanity with a plea to King Hussein for clemency.

A senior Jordanian officer told the Tel Aviv daily, *Yediot Aharonot*: "This is a lone soldier and not an underground group in the Jordanian Army."

The paper's Arab affairs expert, Smadar Perry, who is known for her connections with the Hashemite court, said the prevailing view in Amman was that the soldier would be put on military trial and sentenced to life in prison.

Fears for bride who defied her family

FROM ZAHID HUSSAIN IN KARACHI

SAIMA WAHEED, the Pakistani woman whose right to marry a man of her choice was upheld by a high court this week, has disappeared after she left a women's refuge in Lahore to join her husband.

Arshad Ahmed, her husband, accused his estranged father-in-law of kidnapping his wife and feared that her life is in danger. He said: "My wife has been confined in a basement of a *madrasah* (religious school) run by her uncle. I am worried for her life."

Miss Waheed, 22, a business management student, married Mr Ahmed, a lecturer at the local college, last year against the wishes of her parents. Her father, Hafiz Abdul Waheed, a rich businessman, filed a suit claiming that marriage without the consent of a *wali* (guardian) was invalid in Islamic law. But the Lahore High Court on Monday ruled that the marriage was valid, and rejected the argument that Islam did not allow love before marriage.

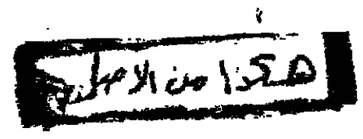
Miss Waheed, who lived in the refuge for almost a year because of a threat to her life from her parents, left the hostel with her husband's lawyer, Abid Saqi. But events took a bitter turn: Mr Ahmed said his wife was not brought to his house, and that he suspected Mr Saqi of handing Miss Waheed to her parents. Mr Saqi insists that he took her to Mr Ahmed's home.

Waheed: married man of her choice

Prior to leaving the refuge, Miss Waheed declared before the deputy Advocate-General that she was going of her own will. "I feel it necessary to record this statement before a judicial officer due to the threat from my relatives," she wrote. Her lawyer, Asma Jehangir, who witnessed Miss Waheed's statement, confirmed that she left with Mr Saqi. "That was the last time I saw her," Mrs Jehangir said.

Miss Waheed's father denies that his daughter is in his custody. "We have no relations with the girl since she humiliated us by violating Islamic traditions," Mr Waheed said.

Police said they were investigating her disappearance.



A detail of Picasso's depiction of civil war

Museums fight over Picasso's Guernica

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN MADRID

A HEATED custody battle has broken out between two Spanish museums over Picasso's *Guernica*, one of the best known paintings of the 20th century.

The anguished 1937 painting commemorates the destruction by German bombers during the Spanish Civil War of the Basque town of Guernica. It hangs at present in Madrid's Reina Sofia Museum, to which it was moved from the Prado five years ago, contrary to the artist's wishes.

Yesterday, however, Basque nationalists renewed demands for the transfer of the painting to the new Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. Touted as the "artistic flagship" of the Basque country, the Guggenheim hopes to secure *Guernica* for its long-awaited inauguration on October 3 this year.

Yet, unlike many Basque politicians, who want *Guernica* "repatriated" to the land of its inspiration, the management of the Guggenheim is prepared to accept the painting on "short-term loan". The "short term" requested, however, is two years.

However, the management of the Reina Sofia, it appears, is loath to part with *Guernica* for even two days. "The painting is going absolutely nowhere," a spokeswoman said. "Its condition is too fragile for it to be moved yet again." She has a point. Picasso's vast canvas has travelled extensively in its sixty years, often in less than ideal conditions.

French leader's daughter becomes formidable Elysée counsellor and image-maker

'Rasputin in mini-skirt' guards doors to power

PARIS FILE by BEN MACINTYRE

MANY of France's kings and presidents have had an *éminence grise*, but there have been few advisers more eminent and less visible than Claude Chirac, the daughter of President Chirac, his communications adviser and, at 34, the most powerful woman in France.

When Mme Chirac first joined her father's political team in 1988 she was regarded by many as little more than an attempt to show the candidate as a family man, a temporary fixture who would fade into an anonymous sinecure if her father gained the highest office.

Instead, she has gradually evolved into M Chirac's most formidable counsellor and image-maker. Since his election victory in 1995, for which Mme Chirac deserves much of the credit, her influence has grown steadily, while her own public profile has become ever more indistinct. "She is everywhere," remarks one Elysée official. "And nowhere."

Mme Chirac's crucial but backroom role in her father's presidency has not passed unchallenged, but several of M Chirac's senior advisers have learnt to their cost that crossing swords with the President's daughter is pointless and perilous.

"She builds a perimeter around him that cannot be crossed," say Nicolas Domenach and Maurice Szafran in a book published this week that has cast a revealing new light on the father-daughter team at the heart of the presidency. "Claude runs the agenda: she holds supreme power. Other than Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister, nobody gets a tête-à-tête with Chirac without going through Claude ... it is an exorbitant power, and thus dangerous."

On one level Mme Chirac is in charge of presidential style: it was she who persuaded her father to do away with his severe spectacles and stiff suits before the 1995 election, and ever since she has closely monitored every aspect of his image, from his orchestrated television appearances to his choice of tie.

But Elysée insiders say that her role goes far beyond that of wardrobe monitor or spin-doctor. She is M Chirac's closest confidante, "Rasputin in a mini-skirt", according to one of her detractors, the main conduit to the President's ear and, of all his advisers, perhaps the only one on whose loyalty he can count unconditionally. In return, the President has provided her with something no other member of the inner circle can assume: invulnerability.

In 1992, the future President had a short, but telling, exchange with Pierre Charron, his press attaché. "Pierre, you think it is a mistake to have Claude by my side?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"I need my daughter. This is not negotiable."

Soon, M Charron was no longer working for M Chirac.

Claude Chirac's grip on presidential PR is matched by a profound aversion to self-publicity. Refusing to give interviews, the President's "shadow" is omnipresent, a figure on the margin of every photograph, mobile telephone in hand. "I have nothing to say about politics," says this most political daughter.

Before she joined the Chirac entourage Mme Chirac once remarked, to her father's distress, that since infancy she could "not remember spending an entire Sunday in his company". Now, barely a day passes when she is not in constant, if invisible, attendance.

Politics becomes art form

THE distinction in France between the arts and politics, always uncertain, has become more bafflingly blurred with politicians declaring themselves to be authors and artists taking to the streets to oppose immigration policy.

Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister, enjoyed baring his soul so much in his recent, plaintive book entitled Entre Nous, *that he has now decided to publish a bi-monthly pamphlet describing his inner feelings. His first, heart-warming subject is reform of national health insurance.*

Alain Delon, the veteran actor, has leapt into the political fray with an open letter deploring the ills of society ranging from child abuse to violence in Algeria.

AFP

M Chirac's daughter, Claude: "She is everywhere — and nowhere"

Game no match for Dassault

SERGE DASSAULT, the flamboyant millionaire who heads the French defence manufacturer Dassault Aviation, has been accused of mounting his own illegal Rambo-style "game safari", by using a custom-built gun turret on an open-top Jeep to blast away at local fauna in northern France.

M Dassault, 71, was intercepted by state hunting officials last October as he was chauffered around his 8,500-acre estate at Coignères, near Versailles, in what was described as "a four-wheel-drive killing machine". Shooting from the back of a moving vehicle is banned in France, and ten animal welfare groups, led by the Brigitte Bardot Foundation, have taken out a civil suit against the industrialist.

"Monsieur Dassault is a dangerous individual who shoots anything that moves. Soon there will be hunting in the forests with tanks and napalm," Laurent Benarrous, the lawyer for the foundation, told the court. M Dassault, whose personal fortune is estimated at £35 million, claimed he simply "did not have time" to cull deer in the traditional way.

If convicted, his vehicle will be confiscated but another, more radical, solution is at hand. M Dassault, a trained pilot, makes the Mirage fighter-bomber and Exocet missiles. French hunting laws make no mention of aerial bombardment.

British Council brought to book over Athens library

Weldon: wants council to restock library

BY MARK HENDERSON

THE British Council is set to abandon a plan to close its lending library in Athens after a campaign by expatriates and educationalists in the city, backed by some of Britain's best-known literary personalities. It is also to review its wider policy of shutting its libraries across Europe and South-East Asia as a result of the Athens campaign.

Ruth Nagley, a poet and novelist who is president of the Concerned English Speakers of Athens, said yesterday that the council was about to bow to pressure from her organisation and keep the library open after failing to find a suitable home for the books.

"We have made it very difficult for them to do anything else," she said. "We showed them that the options they had considered for disposing of the books were not viable." She said the four main bids to rehouse the library were inappropriate because the books would be "left to rot".

John Munby, the director of the British Council in Athens, said yesterday that a decision on the library's future would be announced on Tuesday. He said the situation had been reappraised in light of the protest, and that keeping the books in council hands was now "an option". Funds would also be allocated for development and a trained librarian. "I guarantee that library users will be satisfied with the decision we take next week," Dr Munby said.

The campaign to save the library, first reported in *The Times*, won backing from the novelists Fay Weldon, John Mortimer, Patrick Leigh-Fermor and John Fowles.

"I'm terribly pleased it's going to survive, and it's all due to Ruth Nagley's work," Ms Weldon said yesterday. "She was determined that the British Council should not be allowed to make one of the biggest mistakes of its life, and when she complained, it moved." Ms Weldon said she hoped the council would start to restock its other libraries.

A group of Greek academics have also attacked the planned closure, saying it would have "a deplorable effect on the prospects for Greek students studying in English". Commentators in *The Times* and *The Spectator* condemned the plan as cultural vandalism.

The British Council had hoped to save £7 million by closing down libraries in developed countries where there were alternative English language services, and replacing them with computerised "information centres" with access to the Internet and CD-Roms. But the Athens row has persuaded the council to review this policy. Stephan Roman, its head of information services, has completed a tour of Western European branches to reassess the need for lending services.

Nigel Semmens, a council spokesman, said yesterday library services were under review in Italy, Spain and Germany as well as Greece. "We will continue lending services to the public in all these countries," he disclosed.

■ POP 1

Jane Siberry adds lustre to the distinguished tradition of female Canadian singer/songwriters

■ POP 2

... while the Orb, on tour in Norwich, offer their customary mixture of the weird and the wild

THE TIMES ARTS

■ VISUAL ART

Extraordinarily beautiful portraits from 2,000 years ago go on show at the British Museum

■ ON MONDAY

The importance of being Oscar: Simon Callow talks about his forthcoming walk on the Wilde side

Flying the maple leaf

POP CONCERTS

AT WHELAN'S in Dublin **Jane Siberry's** concert served to underline the strength of the Canadian female singer/songwriter tradition, *Nick Kelly writes*. Combining the intensity of Joni Mitchell, the sensual croon of k d lang and the rhapsodic grace of Mary Margaret O'Hara, Siberry nonetheless adds a distinctive flavour to this maple diet of arty chanteuses.

She sings with a child-like joy, thrilled by the miracle of self-expression. *See The Child*, for instance, with its images of bees, butterflies and blue skies, typifies a certain wispy, fairytale quality in Siberry's lyric style. *You Don't Need Anybody* and *Ain't It Funny?* take a more mature approach, dispensing with the streams of consciousness in which some of Siberry's lyrics aimlessly drift.

Pianist Tim Ray proved particularly adept at creating *mise-en-scène* for Siberry's panoramic vocals. But the plaintive trumpet of David Travers-Smith was perhaps underused. The sustained jazz influence was a little surprising given that Siberry's new album, *Teenager*, is an unadorned acoustic folk record of songs Siberry wrote as a naive, angst-ridden adolescent in her bedroom.

Songwriters have always used their arid pre-adult years to stimulate the creative juices. Siberry, though, has regressed lock, stock and musical barrel in order to rediscover her muse. But it was the more familiar material, such as *Calling All Angels*, which brought the crowd to its feet.

AN **Orb** performance plays to two audiences at once, and the group's gig at the UEA, Norwich was no exception, *John Street writes*. At the front there are the dancers, all arms and stomping feet. At the back there are the sedate circles of seated admirers. The two reactions are a product of the Orb's peculiar mixture of Jungle beats, dub rhythms, swirling sounds and sampled voices.

Behind a white canvas corral, Alex Paterson, the Orb's founder, and his most recent collaborator, Andy Hughes, busy themselves with their screens and consoles. As they earnestly oversee the controls, Paterson and Hughes generate an extraordinary mix of noise and beats, versions of which appear on their new album *Orblivion*, their sixth since 1989. With *Passing of Time*, their opening piece, a voice intones repeatedly "come with us". It is accompanied by the cheeping of an electronic aviary, the echoing drip of water in a cave, stuttering beats, juddering bass notes and repeated melodic phrases.

Only their recent hit single *Toxygene* provides an example of a more conventional musical structure. Otherwise, rhythms and tunes are summoned up and abandoned, revived and then dismissed again. Emerging through these slightly nightmarish textures, there are yet more voices: extracts from the McCarthy hearings, crazed monologues about the evolution of the species, and public service announcements.

But for all these strange messages, the Orb do not play to make a point, or to draw attention to themselves. They are there to perform a function, to serve both the dancers and the seated circles. Judged by this standard, it is hard to fault the quality of the service.

Mummy's dearest

Isabel Carlisle on a stunning collection of portraits from the tombs of Roman Egypt

Faces of antiquity: portraits painted in (from left) AD 160-170; AD 140-160; AD 100-120

An extraordinary and beautiful exhibition has just opened at the British Museum of the very beginnings of painted portraiture in Western art. The people depicted consider themselves to be of Greek origin, descendants of mercenaries who fought for Alexander the Great, living in Egypt between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD. The artists are unknown, and this school of art emerged out of nowhere to fade away just as mysteriously at the onset of Christianity.

The faces are depicted with great sensitivity, as one might expect portraits of the dying and the dead to be. For these images on wood are found tucked into the linen shrouds of mummified corpses, and recent research (including CAT scanning of the skulls) has shown that the age of the skeleton as pinpointed by science corresponds very closely to the age of the faces gazing out at us. Not only that. Reconstruction of the skulls using 3D computer technology proves how very accurate these portraits were.

The theory goes that the portraits, in encaustic (pigments held in beeswax) or gouache (pigments combined with egg yolk) on imported wooden panels, were done at the time of death, first as a tribute to be carried in the funeral procession and then as a lasting memorial to be kept with the corpse. No wonder the expressions are solemn and the tones pallid despite the dark complexions. These are people on the brink of the Egyptian afterlife of Anubis and Osiris that they so clearly believed in, staring back at the living with huge, dark eyes. Many died young and were clearly still handsome. The real revelation is just how accomplished a school of art this was.

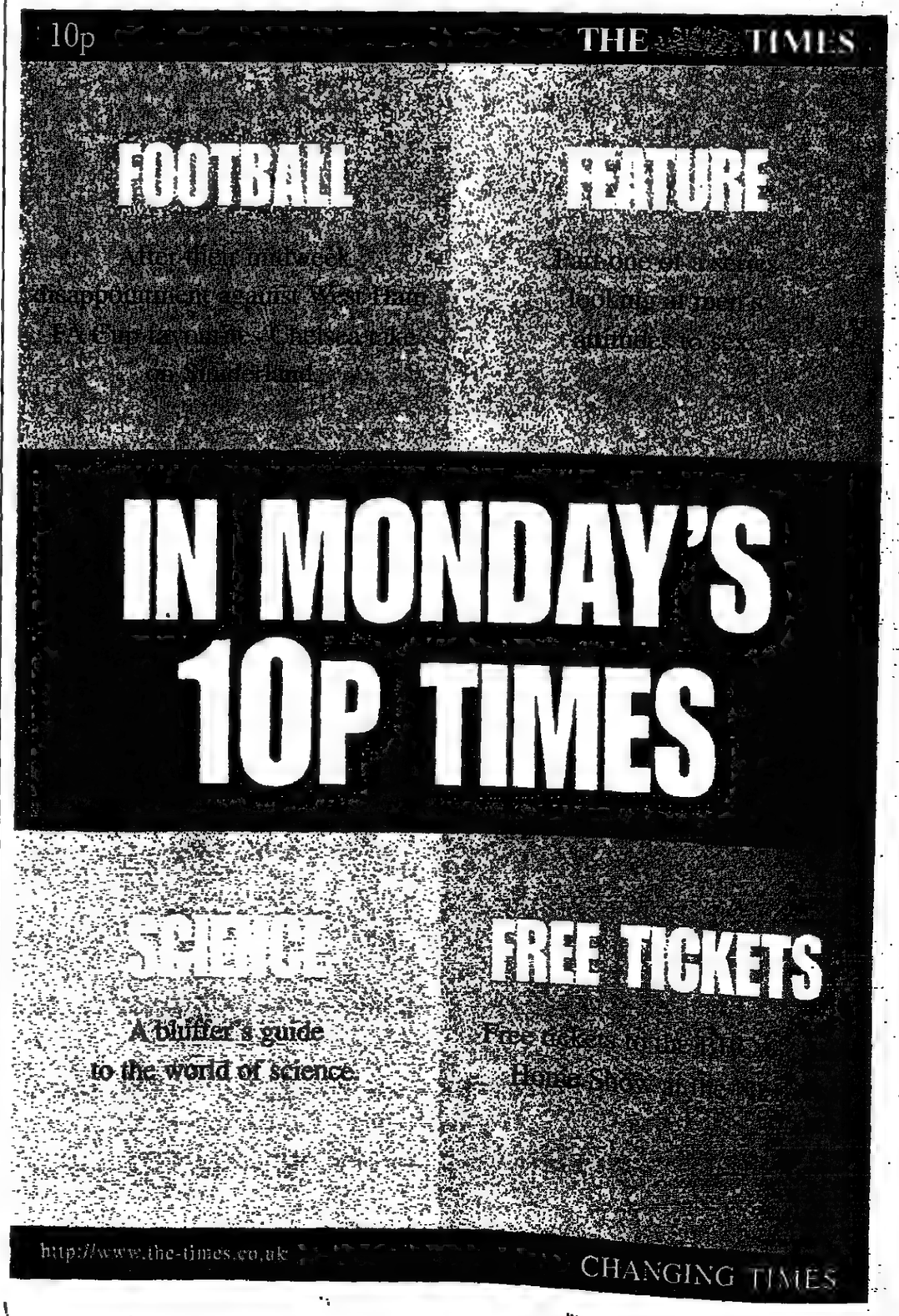
There has never been an exhibition on this subject before and the research involved in bringing all these portraits together, along with jewellery, textiles and the whole paraphernalia of the Egyptian death cult, has resulted in new discoveries. Portraits of a mother and son have been reunited on the basis that they not only came from the same tomb but look remarkably alike. Two portraits from er-Rubayar in the Fayum region by the same artist, of a man and a woman, are now shown side by side. Their carefully painted aristocratic features and elegant costumes in the latest Roman fashion put these among the finest paintings in the exhibition.

Some corpses were wrapped in a linen cloth that had a full-length portrait painted on it. One of a woman wearing a long white tunic and mantle is thought to come from Antinoopolis, the city founded on the Nile by the Emperor Hadrian at the spot where his young lover Antinous had drowned.

She is stepping towards us with her jewelled hands raised in a gesture of communication. Her rather heavy-featured face looks straight ahead and she has the commanding presence of a woman who has the luxury of servants.

The purple of many of the fabrics and gold of the jewellery (sometimes laid in with gold leaf) seems to prefigure the splendour of Byzantium, but it is uncertain if any link exists between these haunting portraits and icon painting. What is clear is that these portraits have no other message to convey than that of belonging to a culturally distinct group. Even as a privileged elite, dressed in their best clothes, they were not designed to impress, but to evoke a close family member. In their directness they skip the idealising portraits of the intervening centuries to link into portraiture of the past 100 years. Very few artists, however, have looked so piercingly into people's souls as these unknown Egyptians.

● Ancient Faces: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt *is at the British Museum until July 20. Standard admission £4.50. Advance booking from First Call, 0171-420 0000*



■ OPINION

Let's celebrate Christo and all the other eccentrics who add a little wit to everyday life

■ THEATRE

A stylish staging of *Waste* launches Peter Hall's company at the Old Vic

THE TIMES ARTS

■ WHAT'S ON

From Zubin Mehta conducting a concert to mark the anniversary of Indian independence . . .

■ WHAT'S ON

. . . to a tour by the comedian Dylan Moran: the top events are previewed in The Directory

Ten cheers for culture's barmy army

Sanity is a much overrated quality, don't you think? Especially in showbiz. The trouble with the arts world today is that it is too damn sane, too businesslike, too cluttered with cautious bureaucrats. In short, it lacks the wow factor. Perhaps 18 years of Torydom have had something to do with that. But with Labour's arts policy as wow-inducing as a night at the Watford Gap service station, I can't see the safety-first mentality going away.

Don't get me wrong. I know that great performing companies cannot function like hippie communes. Even the trendiest theatre directors now accept that it is probably a good idea to employ an accountant to tot up the frocks bill — which wasn't always the case in the wild and carefree Sixties.

But where has the fun gone? Where's the wit and bravado? Where's the "let's do the show right here?" spark of glorious improbability? Too many big arts organisations now seem like factories, their production lines churning out shows that are competent, efficient, reliable . . . and buttock-numbingly predictable. You might as well watch baked beans being canned.

So today this column is donating a few mad inches to a celebration of March hares: the mavericks who remain untouched by dreary old Mr Sanity and his prim sidekick, Ms Commonsense. Hundreds of them are out there: the students mounting *War and Peace* on a bus; the underwater string quartet (I've seen the photographs); the parachuting ballet. Here are some of the virtuosos of eccentricity appearing in Britain in the next few weeks. Drop in on them if you can: they remind you that art is meant to be fun.

Mach's Train. You may know of David Mach's deeds, even if you can't place the name. The feisty Scot built a "Rolls-Royce" from 15,000 telephone directories; an 80ft "Parthenon" from old tyres; a huge face welded from coat-hangers. Other Mach projects used 40,000 matchsticks, hundreds of teddy bears, thousands of beer bottles, and 80 tons of magazines. He takes the *Blue Peter* principle — that you can make anything out of anything if you really, really want to — and proves it on a gigantic scale. But his current project is his *magnum opus*. Outside a supermarket in Darlington he is erecting a massive model of a steam train. When finished, in June, it will be 100ft long, 30ft high, and use 180,000 bricks.

To say that his work evokes strong reactions would be an understatement. An arsonist killed himself setting fire to Mach's rubber Polaris on the South Bank in 1983, and two years ago Mach's sumo-wrestler statues in Edinburgh were mysteriously decapitated. The Darlington train has had its knockers, too. After all, it is consuming £600,000 of lottery money. But Mach is one of the great originals. And the fact that his epic monuments never last more that a few weeks (for one reason or another) gives him an affinity with:

Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Yesterday the Yorkshire Sculpture Park opened an exhibition devoted to the husband-and-wife team who specialise in wrapping bridges, buildings, even whole islands. In 1995, after 24 years of negotiation with the unaccountably nervous German Government, the pair succeeded in covering the Reichstag in Berlin with a million square foot of silver fabric. By the time the wraps came off, a month later, 1.5 million people had gawped at this bizarre spectacle and wondered about its literally hidden meaning.

WEEK IN THE ARTS

RICHARD MORRISON

Alas, although there will be plenty of photographs, the biggest wrapped object actually present in the Yorkshire show will be a motor car. Why doesn't the Millennium Commission arrange for Christo and Jeanne-Claude to wrap some really impressive icon of the British Establishment for the year 2000? Douglas Hogg, perhaps.

Acid Brass. The most incongruous musical mismatch since Dame Kiri Te Kanawa recorded *West Side Story*? It sounds like it: a brass band, neatly uniformed, trying to play acid house music. But the audience at the Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts a couple of weeks ago went wild when the Williams Fairey Engineering Band launched into transcriptions of Eighties dance music. Now this wonderful marriage of opposites is to be repeated in London (Queen Elizabeth Hall, April 19). What next? The greatest hits of Snoop Doggy Dogg sung by the choir of King's College, Cambridge? That may be nearer than you think. Already we have . . .

Hip hop opera. Or "hip-hopera", as the cognoscenti prefer. Next month the Nottingham Playhouse premieres *Preshh*, the story of a rapper whose career turns as sour as his lyrics — all set to hip hop dance music devised by DJs on stage. What makes this opera even more remarkable is that it started as a project for 100 unemployed youngsters in Nottingham, 40 of whom will constitute the final cast. It might be raw, but I bet it has more wow per decibel than *Tosca* at Covent Garden.

If you want the ultimate musical wow, however, try . . .

Virtual World Orchestra. For three nights (April 4-6) the Old Fruitmarket in Glasgow will be linked via the Internet to "techno-artists, DJs, bands and multimedia performers" from around the world. Some sounds and images will arrive via the Net, some will be created live, and some (here's the really weird bit) will be performed live but *controlled by Internet users*. And if you don't have a clue what I'm wittering on about, I would advise an early night with a cup of cocoa instead.

I could go on. I could mention *Tight Roaring Circle*, which will turn the Roundhouse in Chalk Farm, London, into a vast "choreographic instrument" later this month; or *Blue Skies*, which will install a "virtual landscape" consisting of giant floating cows in a giant floating flowerbed into the historic naval dockyard in Chatham next week. Or *Miracles*, a gargantuan music-theatre project in the Albert Hall next month that 1,000 youngsters have been preparing for the past two years.

No, insanity is not dead. It's alive and well and living on the vibrant fringes, where there are no committees to shout "impractical!", no bureaucrats to scream "uncontrollable!", and no rulebooks to say "impossible!". Thank goodness for the March hares. They are plotting the future, while our grandiose culture palaces are busy mummifying the past.

DONALD COOPER

Brittle vulnerability: Felicity Kendal as the doomed Amy O'Connell in Granville Barker's timely *Waste*

Yes, minister

THEATRE

Waste
Old Vic

To see Granville Barker's *Waste* is to know what Shaw meant when he called its author "the most distinguished and incomparably the most cultivated person whom circumstances had driven into the theatre". If just a few of the plays that find their way into John Gunter's dark-blue boxset over the coming months display as much elegance of mind, moral scope and political sharpness, then we will be hailing Peter Hall's inaugural season at the Old Vic as a notable event.

Does that sound a slightly wintry compliment? Well, there were moments when the play also put me in mind of Maugham's claim that Barker needed "more force, more go, more bluntness, more guts, more beef". But then, much of *Waste* occurs in the airless salons and high councils of the Tory party. Barker was on weekending terms with many of the great men of his day: which is why his characters' guarded wit and knowing banter has such deadly authenticity.

Hall gives us *Waste* as Barker radically revised it in 1926, meaning that Labs as well as Libs are in opposition; but the plot is the same one that got the play banned in 1907. Michael Pennington's Henry Trebell, the political maverick chosen to steer a key Bill through the Commons, has an affair with a married woman, Felicity Kendal's Amy O'Connell. She gets pregnant, has an abortion, and dies. It was the back-street surgery that offended the censor, but he must have been equally distressed by the play's dangerously confident forays into the back alleys of politics.

It is an even more timely piece than in 1985, when the RSC staged a blend of the 1907 and 1926 versions, because the subject of Trebell's Bill, the disestablishment of the Church, is again showing signs of edging on to the political agenda. And when was scandal, sleaze and attempted cover-up more topical than now? True, Denis Quilley's worldly-wise Prime Minister has little in common with John Major; but I would be surprised if the great scene in which Trebell's strengths are balanced with his potential for embarrassment has not had its counterparts in this Parliament.

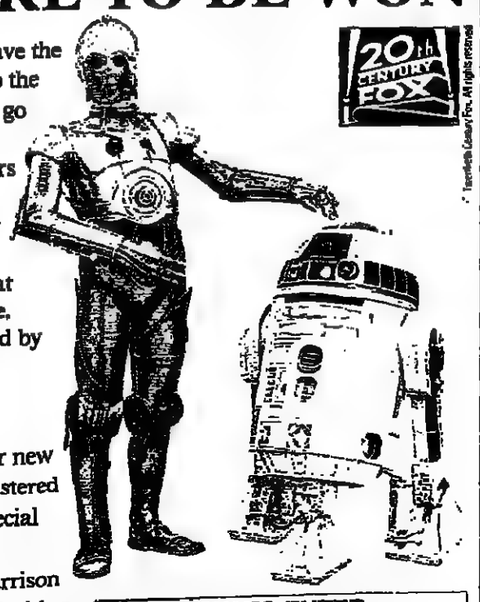
With Alan Dobie making a canny but brutal play for power, Peter Blythe hopping about the moral high ground like some poor, goosed Gummer, Greg Hicks behaving most unpredictably as the aggrieved widower, and Quilley trying to manipulate events to a safe conclusion, you feel you are watching the political chess game in action. But that game only emphasises the extent to which Trebell's strange blend of idealism and ruthlessness, moral passion and hardheadedness, is exceptional.

Kendal catches Amy's brittle vulnerability and, in extremis, the feral panic that has her half-clutching, half-beating at her inconvenient womb. Anna Carteret and David Yelland make something of two Trebell loyalists: his sister and his doctor. But it is, as it should be, Pennington's evening. If he misses the stunted paternal yearnings, it is because Barker de-emphasised them in his 1926 version, preferring to show us Trebell's mental rigour and the chilling realism with which he faces adversity. All this Pennington successfully suggests, his face yellowing under the strain, but his charisma intact to the end. To lose such a man is indeed what the title says: a waste.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

COMPETITION THE TIMES

TICKETS TO *STAR WARS* PREMIERE TO BE WON



Readers of *The Times* have the chance to win tickets to the premiere of *Star Wars* and go to the star-studded party afterwards. We have 10 pairs of tickets to give away.

The premiere, in aid of The Prince's Trust, is on Thursday March 20, 1997, at the Odeon, Leicester Square, London and will be attended by Prince Charles.

The film, which was first released 20 years ago, has restored prints, enhanced or new visual effects, a newly-remastered soundtrack — and some special surprises.

It stars Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher, Peter Cushing and Alec Guinness. Hamill will be at the premiere and so will writer and director George Lucas.

At the after-film bash you will see the original X-Wing fighter, visit the Yarvin 4 Bar, play on the interactive games machines and dance the night away to the original *Star Wars* disco theme — and eat and drink till the small hours.

The lucky winners will also each receive an original poster of the *Star Wars Trilogy*.

HOW TO ENTER

All you have to do is call
0839 444 546
with your answer to this question:

Which famous catch phrase came from Star Wars?
a) "I'll be back."
b) "Make my day."
c) "May the Force be with you."

The winners will be chosen at random from all correct entries received. **The line will be open until midnight tomorrow.**

Normal Times Newspapers competition rules apply. Calls cost 50p per minute.

CHANGING TIMES

Peter Hall won't vote as a protest at the low priority given to culture by Labour and Tories alike. **Richard Attenborough** disagrees

Believe me: Blair cares about the arts

I regret that there should be a chink of disagreement between Sir Peter Hall and myself about the arts in the UK. I fear, however, on reading his article of March 8, that there are several. Not to vote at all, his stated intention, surely is not on and failing to differentiate between this Government, both sleazy and inept, and a Labour alternative seems to me inconceivable.

I sat next to Sir Peter at a Garrick Club luncheon in honour of Sir John Gielgud's investiture with the Order of Merit. Sir Peter was again voicing his incontrovertible plea for the underpinning of our provincial theatres. And of course he is due all praise for his dogged commitment to their continued survival. As Equity is at present making plain, their very existence has for far too long been dependent on paying actors salaries so low as to be totally unacceptable.

Sir Peter is correct in his anxiety. Provincial theatres, now that we have lost our invaluable repertory network, are the essential routes to our great national companies. Any arts policy that fails to recognise this fact (which Mark Fisher, Shadow Minister for the Arts, most certainly does) lacks all credibility.

But the problem starts even earlier. Tony Blair, in his speech at the Mansion House in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the British Screen Advisory Council, acknowledged the ludicrous anomaly of the absence of mandatory grants for dance and drama students and undertook to do something about it.

The latest proposal announced by Virginia Bottomley goes some way to rectifying the situation, although not nearly far enough. It also promulgates the use of National Lottery funds for this purpose rather than the total change of government policy which is patently necessary and long overdue. How ludicrous that a young aspiring actor should be debarred from a drama school grant if his or her local authority declines to offer the initial sum which, under this proposal, is the only entry route to further subsidy from the lottery.

I had been under the impression — wrongly , of course — that the Heritage Department's concern was first and foremost the provision of support for these students. But I can only presume that Mrs Bottomley sees their plight as a useful weapon in her covert battle with local authorities.

A Secretary of State who refers to Mr Blair's speech as merely a "luvvies' charter" betrays a total lack of respect for the very constituency she is supposed to serve. What a discourteous, insulting reference to the acting profession.

Sir Peter lamented in his article that Mr Blair did not come up with the goods in his speech at the Mansion House — "the goods" being an acknowledgement that the arts are in crisis. But what he has failed to recognise is the unique commitment expressed on that occasion. Never in my lifetime have I heard a British political leader so clearly state: "The arts and cultural industries have been on the sidelines for too long. They are not peripheral to our lives. I want them to be part of the main agenda."

For 18 years, until the advent of the lottery, the arts were scarcely on the Government's agenda, mainly owing to the philosophy "There is no such thing as society", articulated so famously by Margaret Thatcher. But Mr Blair says refreshingly: "Art and society go together ... And we believe in society."

Sir Peter quite rightly begrudges paying £150 a ticket for a subsidised Royal Opera House. Surely Mr Blair speaks to his condition when he says: "What is elitist is a society in which art is hoarded for the few and never experienced by the many. Don't blame art. Change society."

The Labour leader has also declared his commitment to public service broadcasting. In addition he has given an undertaking that, if in power, he will reinstate our membership of Eurimage, from which Mrs Bottomley so disastrously has removed us. Renewed membership of this organisation, which fosters and partly finances EC production, will benefit our film industry enormously. He went on to state that, as a principle, the lottery would not be used to supplant essential government backing of the arts. When appropriate, it would be utilised to make available additional support "to shape the development of the arts in the interests of the broad majority of people".

Mr Blair's views are absolutely clear. The passion of any government he leads will be education and he believes the arts to be an essential part of education. It was unfortunate, after his wide-ranging Mansion House speech, that Nesta, the proposed National Endowment for Science, Humanities and the Arts, was the only element that was widely reported. And not unnaturally, because the Nesta concept is timed for the millennium, this created Sir Peter's impression of "jam tomorrow". It would be naive to expect Mr Blair to make promises of hard cash for the arts at this point, nor would anyone of good sense wish him to. We have had enough of broken promises. But no one can doubt his overall intentions and conviction. I certainly do not. And, unlike Sir Peter, I am convinced there is a massive difference of priority in regard to the arts between Left and Right.

Peter, if you don't believe things can and must change for the better, then don't bother to vote. But I simply cannot accept that you are right to opt out. I know that Labour, in addition to its determination to tackle all the other things so wrong with our country today, does genuinely care about the arts. For all of us who have fought to preserve them, it is our best chance for the future.

Lord Attenborough takes the Labour whip in the Lords.

The true test of primary schools

Roger Scruton fears that our stock of knowledge is being destroyed

Only at one primary school in a thousand do children consistently reach the standards now required of them, and church schools are by far the best in the league. These facts give a telling picture of what has *really* happened to British education, and why. David Blunkett is obliged by his position to blame the mess on the Tories but he knows that the causes lie far deeper than party politics, and that education ministers who have tried to amend things have always been so fiercely resisted by teachers, civil servants and the educational bureaucracy that their efforts have come to naught.

Since the late 1950s our education system has fallen into the hands of an egalitarian Establishment dedicated to the destruction of traditional elites and with its political voice in the Labour Party. It achieved its greatest triumph with Labour's successful assault on the grammar schools, and with the herding of children into comprehensives.

It has been conclusively shown by Dr John Marks and others that comprehensivisation damaged the educational opportunities of all children — and not just those who would have attended a grammar school. But the relevant research was unscrupulously rubbished by the civil servants. Having destroyed secondary education, it was only natural that the egalitarians should turn their attention to primary education, too.

Traditional ways of teaching children to read were displaced by the "look and say" and "whole language" methods, which appeal to progressive teachers precisely because they put every child on an equal footing with the mentally retarded. The Plowden report — a piece of sentimental guff that assumed the status of a sacred text — advocated "child-centred" learning, and so encouraged schools to stay at the level of their intake, rather than at the level to which their intake should aspire. Old ideas of discipline were displaced, so that troublemakers could obtain equal status with their victims.

The Establishment achieved another triumph. It became illegal for state schools to employ any teacher who had not attended a college of education. Those with genuine knowledge were thereby driven out of the system; what serious graduate would want to sit through the year of drivel provided by a college of education?

The process went hand in hand with the bureaucratisation of the schools — to the point where the state system is overloaded with meddlesome advisers and administrators. The educational bureaucracy is steeped in the same egalitarian dogmas as the National Union of Teachers and the education colleges. All have joined Labour in opposing the Conservative attempt to assess the educational attainments of schoolchildren, and all remain rootedly hostile to the only real solution to our present problem: the complete and immediate privatisation of the schools.

And that is why we should be wary of the Labour Party. For it has spearheaded all the "reforms" which brought about the present catastrophe, and has no real proposals for the future, apart from the threat to remove charitable status from public schools. Hostility to traditional elites remains the most important motive behind its educational thinking. But such elites are the friends of education. The public schools were the model for the grammar schools, and their pursuit of learning for its own sake. In other words, not child-centred, but *subject*-centred learning has played a part in ensuring that our country has been governed, until now, by a genuinely educated class.

The state sector was successful so long as it tried to emulate the private sector, modelling curriculum, ethos and discipline on the standards set by the private schools. But the Establishment that controls the state sector is hostile to private education, which it sees as confining education to those who can pay for it. This view is correct, but only because the destruction of the state sector has caused education to be increasingly monopolised by the upper classes.

Church of England, Roman Catholic and Jewish primaries do well because they mostly adhere to traditional teaching methods, standards of discipline, and dress codes. They recognise the place of religion, assembly and prayers in creating the ethos of a school, and in providing children with the examples which will make learning worthwhile. They are the least "child-centred" of our primary schools, and are in the business not of making childhood permanent, but of helping children out of it.

We should recognise that there are essentially two views about the role of education in society, and that Labour has consistently espoused the wrong one. The right view sees education as a means to conserve and enhance our legacy of knowledge. The wrong view sees education as a means to provide advantages. Those who take the wrong view are happy to see knowledge disappear, just so long as children are equal in their lack of it. Those with the right view recognise that knowledge can be conserved only if clever children are given the best chance to acquire it. When the wrong view prevails, knowledge disappears, as it is doing from Britain. The effect of this can already be witnessed in the moronisation of popular culture; in due course it will be observed in all our national institutions, in the economy, in social and political life, and in our final lapse into barbarism.

Delights of Venetian decay

The crumbling stones of Venice, like the poor of Vietnam, still arouse our awe

The appeal of Venice is not just its beauty, but its sheer oddness: decaying canals, flickering candles, dark alleys and bright quays.

Venice on Monday was *al dente*. The air was crisp, the sun on San Mark's cool and penetrating. At this time of year, Italian tourism is still an individual rather than a collective noun. We do not have to queue to breathe. The bride of the sea allows us space to admire her wrinkles.

The older I get, the more I feel a connoisseur of oldness. Last autumn I visited another antique place, north Vietnam. While Venice's wrinkles are etched in brick and stone, Vietnam's are those of a way of life. Venice's charm is that of slowly degenerating splendour. Vietnam's charm is of a rapidly vanishing medievalism, of women still wading in rice fields, of mud-walled villages with rush-mat lanes, of ox carts, of food cooked outdoors, of laughing, unshod children. It is the picturesque charm of other people's poverty.

Such pleasure is hard to defend. It cannot be explained as only admiration for beauty or for past history. In both cases, the thrill is of an encompassing antiquity. When I first visited Venice, I thought I knew what to expect. Yet the eccentricity stunned me. Cities on land we understand. They evolved from chariots to jet planes without too much damage to their essence.

Venice is utterly obsolete. In 1855 the city fathers almost succeeded in building a boulevard down the Grand Canal and a rail bridge to the Lido. The proposal failed. Today's Venice is a monument to that failure. As Hugh Honour wrote in his *Companion Guide*, when we remember Venice we recall not its treasures "but the city and the lagoon", decaying canals, flickering candles, dark alleys and bright quays. The appeal is not just of beauty but of sheer oddness.

Some find such antiquarianism obscene. They believe that Venice should fall as it rose, with the tide of history. James Cameron in an early film of Venice told the place to die in peace, to slide with dignity beneath the waters. "Let it go," he said. "And let our generation glory in being the last to have seen it as it was." Since then the population of old Venice has halved. This has been accompanied by an effort to prop up buildings that are unlikely ever to be occupied. The city becomes ever more ersatz. As it empties, Venice's reason for existing is to celebrate the absence of a reason for existing. It will be for urban necrophiliacs.

If that is all, I shudder at how to describe my affection for Vietnam. Only in the remoter parts of India have I encountered landscape so untouched by cars, chemicals, concrete or other modern conveniences. Vietnam is free of India's obtrusive destitution. Every village smiles hospitality. Mountains rise sheer from paddy fields. The land seems to have been lifted from a medieval painting and frozen by half a century of colonialism and communism. From the Perfume Pagoda in the Mountain of Fragrant Traces down to the sea at the Gulf of Tonkin, relics of man and nature are only now being marked for visiting and tourist exploitation.

As such they are doomed. Just as the ancient economy of Venice could not survive motor cars and tourists, so what appeals to the Western visitor in Vietnam cannot last. Like a tomb long hidden from view, it will dissolve on first contact with light. Concrete towers are now rising over Hanoi as party officials corruptly breach their own conservation laws. Rural villages are swept by Tarmac roads, bringing motorbikes to carry peasants and their children off to jobs in towns.

On the 20-mile shore of Ha Long Bay, 3,000 dragon's teeth islands march across a turquoise horizon. It is the most sublime seascape I know. Until now this shoreline was as Joseph Conrad might have seen it, with only an oily steamer (or an American bomber) intruding on ancient fishing settlements.

Today promenades are covering the shore, launches and holiday camps are arriving, new hotels are spewing untreated sewage and plastic into the bay. Ha Long is a Unesco "World Heritage Site", but the cause is hopeless. As the aspic of communism dissolves, it is supplanted by total decontrol, by Asia's philistine commercialism. Some Vietnamese may be richer. I wonder how many.

These thoughts are, I know, outrageous. How dare we delight in the poverty or decay of other people's cultures. When I marvel at the picturesque integrity of a Vietnamese village, I am surely like Captain Cook, seeking "noble savages" to bring back to display at London dinner parties. I ought to deplore the rats and welcome any development that moves Vietnam up the World Bank league table. As for the attention lavished on the empty palazzi of the Grand Canal, this is inexcusable when millions of Italians live in greater squalour. Such Grand Tour revivalism is shameful.

Simon Jenkins

I am not ashamed. An observer of this debate, the geographer Richard Lowenthal, wrote recently that a fascination with the past is not just an "act of mourning for worlds known to be irrevocably lost". For most people, not just those educated in history, these worlds are "more vividly felt, more lucid, more real than the murky and ambiguous present".

The historian Raphael Samuel went even further. In his *Theatres of Memory* he pointed out that ruined castles, steam trains, old music, battlefield tours and folklore festivals are part and parcel of popular culture. Fusion of past with present is the essence of our sense of place, of family, home and community. As we get richer and have more leisure, we spend it searching out capsules of past cultures, if only because "the past is a foreign country" and we like to travel.

Strangest of these cultures are those whose picturesqueness lies partly in their poverty and decay. That is why Westerners now travel as far as India and Vietnam to search them out. Since they echo a past that is becoming thankfully more rare, they have become precious. Vietnam's urban and rural villages remind us of England before the Industrial Revolution. They are without privacy, sanitation, machines or easy mobility. They are also tight-knit and family-controlled.

Certainly, their inhabitants want to escape to the wealth of the city. They may welcome the World Bank bulldozers that will raze their villages and obliterate their way of life. But that does not strip the world they are fleeing of its values or its charm. The poor of Venice likewise deserted its damp tenements and rancid canals to the smart suburbs of the mainland. Perhaps such depopulation should not be called sad. Suggestions by Venice in Peril that the poor should be encouraged back into the old city have about them a touch of guilt. Tourism has helped to empty the city and now tourists want the poor returned to give more authenticity to the street scene. Venice will not recover that sort of normality. But that does not make it any less beautiful or the battle to preserve it any less worthwhile.

We do not love such places simply because they are old; or because they tell us how far we have travelled up the path to civilisation. Brought up as an historian, I believe that the past is littered with signposts to the future. Europe is full of such signposts. They tell us that the route to instant higher disposable income may not, in retrospect, have been the one we were glad we took. Ask the resident of any English city centre.

Accusing Vietnam of being about to wreck its most beautiful places may seem condescending. From a Westerner it may seem insufferably smug. Yet had Venice been destroyed when Ruskin warned of "the ruination of her honour" in the last century, Italy would now regard itself as immeasurably the poorer. So too would the whole world.

In its quest for wealth, Vietnam is facing precisely that impoverishment. We should tell it so.

Devil's work

WHILE filming recently in Belfast, Brad Pitt, a leading Hollywood actor, was punched by a couple of Irish toughs who mistook him for a Protestant.

Pitt, who is alleged to find favour with many female moviegoers, was undercover at the time, researching his role in a forthcoming film, *Devil's Own*.

Brad Pitt: in the wars

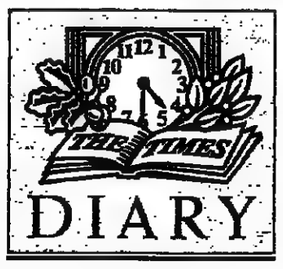
In it he plays a young man who, after seeing his father shot dead by the security forces, becomes an IRA terrorist. Having become the most wanted man in Britain, he then flees to America and his uncle, played by Harrison Ford.

When the $70 million film, which is said to be largely sympathetic to the IRA, was in the can, Pitt called it a "disaster" and the "most irresponsible bit of film-making" he'd ever seen.

Now he is taking his promotion duties seriously, saying: "I'm speaking for this situation that's gone on for years. I felt a huge responsibility for that."

As to the assault, in an interview with *Rolling Stone* magazine, Pitt says: "At one point I stop at a Protestant bookstore. I look in the window for two seconds. Boom! I get this wing from two Catholic guys. It about knocked me over. They just kept on walking. You know that walk?"

At this point in the interview, Pitt gets up and struts around the room, elbows out, like a chicken, adding, "When you're pumped?"



Man of letters

SOME good news for the troubled Albanian President Sali Berisha. His young cousin, Boojab Berisha, has graduated from his job as a Federal Express mail-boy in New York to become a junior reporter on *Illyria*, an Albanian newsletter published in the city.

The young Berisha fled to the States several years ago and has since done a selection of menial jobs in order to earn money to send back to his family in Albania. "Sadly, I cannot go back," he says in broken but breathlessly excited English. "But with all the money I have saved, I hope my family will be joining me here soon."

● *Congratulations to the Treasury minister Phillip Oppenheim on the victory of his collie cross-breed, Vom, in the Westminster Dog of the Year competition. The dog was given to him as a puppy by one of his Amber Valley constituents. But why call it Vom? "It's short for Vomit," says a close friend of Oppenheim. "Some people think it's a German name, but it isn't. Phillip played a lot of rugby in his youth and he thought Vom was a cuddly sort of name."*

"You mean this rally wasn't a red nose day stunt?"

Lock out

SURREAL scenes in the Whitehall gloaming on Thursday as guests arrived for the Prime Minister's dinner in honour of the Saudi Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud to find the Downing Street gates firmly locked.

What looked like a gaggle of wearied human rights protesters was in fact the Governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George, William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the bullish Lord King of Wartnaby, formerly of British Airways, and some impressive-looking Arab guests in full desert rig, all unable to get through to dinner.

On the invitation, they had been instructed to arrive before 7.25. This lot had come at 7.20, neither embarrassingly early nor dangerously late.

After some awkward shuffling and talk of the weather, they were eventually waved through to an apologetic No 10.

William Hague and his fiancée Ffion Jenkins: divided

No leaks

THE loyalties of William Hague, Secretary of State of Wales, will be strained at Cardiff Arms Park this afternoon as he watches England play Wales with Ffion Jenkins, his fiancée. As a Yorkshireman, he should back England. His political office, and more importantly his future wife and family, would suggest he cheers for the Reds.

It was precisely for occasions such as these that Miss Jenkins taught Hague the words to *Mae Hen Wlad fy Nhadau — Land of My Fathers*. It was during rehearsals that Hague reportedly developed a more than purely professional admiration for her.

"He will be singing the Welsh national anthem," says his press officer, "and clapping in the right places. But I expect at the end of the game his face will be a mask."

P·H·S

PERILS OF THE SALOON

The difference between populist instinct and civil abuse

Careless talk of "IRA scum" and ill-judged comparisons with Myra Hindley may not cost Tory votes; but a price is surely paid in dignity. For every citizen concerned that a Home Office minister has prejudged the guilt of a suspected terrorist there will be others who say that he is right to put victims first. Whatever the pollster's calculation, David Maclean's behaviour is unjustified. A feel for populist instincts is a necessary part of a politician's make-up; but even more so is a respect for the civilised formulae on which liberal democracy depends.

Mr Maclean is only the latest Conservative politician this month to position himself squarely in the saloon bar. In their own, very different ways, the backbenchers Nicholas Budgen and David Evans have spoken to their constituents' viscera. It is a dangerous exercise, and in their case, even more than Mr Maclean's, likely to bear only bitter fruit.

Mr Maclean's comments would have been clumsy delivered off the cuff. In print, albeit in private correspondence, they are deeply regrettable. Roisin McAliskey has not yet been convicted of terrorism. Mr Maclean nevertheless suggests in a letter to a constituent that Ms McAliskey is unworthy of public sympathy. Even on a crude assessment of consequences, the minister was foolish to express such sentiments. His words will, in some Irish eyes, give republicans the oxygen of credibility. IRA propagandists have always alleged that British justice is administered by men who prefer deep prejudice to due process.

Politicians, of course, have a duty to acknowledge society's prejudices. A government which enthroned reason and neglected the language of the heart or the pull of the gut would soon forfeit the people's trust. Worse, without political sensitivity to genuine concerns on security and identity, these passions will in the words of John Biffen become "the possession of darker forces outside the established polity". Political wisdom resides in knowing how to speak to the nation's fears without being dictated to by them.

In that light, David Maclean is faithful to the feel of any Tory postbag in expressing sincere anger at the leverage exercised within elite circles by lobby groups for prisoners. He would, however, be a better politician if he was also capable of recognising in his writing that one of the civilised principles that terrorism threatens is the presumption of innocence until proven otherwise.

A feel for the Tory pulse is also attributed to David Evans and Nicholas Budgen by their defenders. Both have been attacked for playing the race card. Mr Evans with a racist obscenity to a school audience, Mr Budgen for asking the Tories to make immigration an election issue. Mr Evans's conduct has been explained away by some Tories as a reflection of his constituents' genuine but hidden feelings, the hate that dare not speak its name. Although he spoke out of turn, they say, he only spoke for his people. Others may think so, but it is unlikely that he spoke for anything other than a minority; a genuine racial tolerance distinguishes most parts of British life. Even if he did reflect a strain of popular feeling, he did so with a crude vulgarity that revolts.

Nicholas Budgen is not a vulgarian, but his own attempt to turn differences between the parties on immigration into a Tory rallying point is ill-judged. It may well be possible to take issue with Labour's proposals to relax immigration regulations at the margins. Mr Budgen may sincerely believe that it is only the strictest of policies which guarantees good race relations. But if there is one act which will certainly inflame racial feeling, it is throwing delicate questions of immigration policy into the cauldron of the election campaign. The public mood has, in any case, changed since Enoch Powell could engineer swings in the West Midlands by dressing racist sentiments in a toga. The party of One Nation has better tunes to sing than terrace chants.

TO UNITE THE JEWS

If the Chief Rabbi cannot, who can?

The festival of Purim is when Jews celebrate their ancestors' deliverance from the Persians. It was Esther, the Israelite Queen of the Persian King Ahasuerus, whose ingenuity saved her nation from destruction. Her fortitude — "If I perish, I perish" — has been an inspiration in this century. The late Hugo Gryn — broadcaster, Reform rabbi and Auschwitz survivor — devoted his life to healing the wounds left by the Holocaust.

The passing of such a man ought to have been an occasion for the Jewish denominations to bury their disputes. It was not. By attempting to honour his friend Hugo Gryn not as a Reform rabbi but as a human being, the Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, has found himself denounced from both wings of the Jewish community. First he evoked protests from some Progressive rabbis by not attending the funeral. Then he dismayed not only the ultra-Orthodox minority, but also some Orthodox rabbis of his own majority United Hebrew Congregations, by eulogising Gryn at a secular memorial meeting.

Yesterday the *Jewish Chronicle* published a private letter in rabbinical Hebrew from Dr Sacks to Dayan Chanoch Padwa, an ultra-Orthodox leader, which used strong language about "those who destroy the faith" and appeared to be at odds with his public praise for Gryn. The *Chronicle* accused Dr Sacks of treating "respect for fellow Jews" as "merely a public duty", and acting as though it could be "contradicted outright behind closed doors". One senior Reform rabbi has now called for the creation of a separate progressive chief rabbinate, which would cause a formal, permanent and irrevocable split in the Jewish community, not just in Britain but throughout the Commonwealth. Though most Progressive rabbis have not echoed this divisive proposal, the impression has been given that the Chief Rabbi has sacrificed principle for "diplomacy". This is damaging, not just to Dr Sacks, but to the image of Anglo-Jewry.

Those who accuse the Chief Rabbi of hypocrisy should recall his speech at the Hugo Gryn memorial meeting, where he said: "In the months that led up to this evening I tried in many ways, through private conversations and correspondence, to carry the various groups in our community with me, however difficult the task. With hindsight I now know that I tried too hard. I made regrettable mistakes. And my attempts to bring peace failed." Thus even before the offending letter was published, Dr Sacks in effect admitted that he had gone too far to appease the unappeasable. His end did not justify the means. The letter was indeed a mistake. But it was written for honourable motives. It should not be taken as a definitive statement. A Chief Rabbi must be big enough to learn from his mistakes. This one is. Esther would have understood him.

The Times has often expressed admiration for Jonathan Sacks. It is rare enough for a religious leader to earn the respect of believers and atheists alike; but the resonance enjoyed by his new book, *The Politics of Hope*, is proof of that. If a man of his courage and wisdom cannot reconcile the various traditions of Judaism, even for quite limited purposes (supporting Israel, opposing anti-Semitism), then the outlook is bleak for Anglo-Jewry. As the proverb has it "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

SCRUM DOWN FOR HISTORY

To stand still is to lose: in rugby and the game of life

The triple crown and the five nations championship crunch to a climax this afternoon. This rugby season has shown that, contrary to reports, there is still life in the old game in the northern hemisphere. Much remains to play for on this last Saturday of the international season. A Scottish win in Paris could give England the championship. A Welsh victory in Cardiff would deny England the triple crown. Either would save Celtic face, and crown campaigns which will otherwise end in disappointment. So national pride is at stake, and so are individual places on the Lions' summer tour to the unforgiving arena of South Africa. Old warriors such as Jonathan Davies and Will Carling may hang up their international boots tonight.

And next season everything will be changed. As usual there will be new players coming on, new hopes and pernickety new laws. But two of the cathedrals of the game will be utterly changed. Cardiff Arms Park is to be turned through 90 degrees and rebuilt as a superdome for the World Cup. And after today's match French rugby will leave the Parc des Princes to return to the north of Paris, at the new Stade de France. These moves reflect the growing popularity, success and money in the game.

Rugby stadiums are not really much like cathedrals. They are concrete sports factories, malodorous, and not numinous when empty. But both places are haunted by the history and folklore of the game. The best singing of the most rousing tribal anthems has always been heard at Cardiff and Paris. Cardiff Arms Park, in the centre of town, goes back more than 113 years to the beginning of rugby. Generations of Welshmen have trooped there to triumph or disaster — until recently, more often the former. Great tries and famous victories there echo in the memory and congest the records.

The Parc des Princes has been used for internationals only since 1972. And it is a long way from the heartland of national rugby in southwest France, not in the centre of it as the once and future Arms Park is. But it too has its ghosts. Jean-Pierre Rives with his blond hair, often bloodied, always shone first to the centre of the mauls and rucks. Or Serge Blanco started to run, kick and chase from the most unpromising positions. For rugby exemplifies broader national characteristics. French rugby displays cavalry dash and unreliability. Scotland play with rising ferocity when they are losing. Jonathan Davies is just the latest of the line of spring-heeled Welsh half backs who have danced through the world's best and then fed the ball out. When the spirit moves them, and their wind is up, the Irish can rampage over the best. And England, the pioneers, can display their native virtues of discipline, interactive teamwork and bulldog efficiency.

This afternoon's hour and a half of passionate intensity in Cardiff and Paris is only sport. But sport too has its lasting glories as well as its transient parables.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Parallel texts and a fictional life

From Professor John Frow

Sir, May I clarify the criticisms that I made of Graham Swift's *Last Orders* and which you reported ("Booker winner denies plot 'theft'", March 10).

I have quite explicitly not accused Mr Swift of plagiarism. Nor should it be assumed that I believe there is a problem in principle with writers making free use of earlier literary materials. To the contrary, much of my own theoretical work has been concerned with the way literary texts are built out of other texts, a process which I see as entirely normal and appropriate; I do not seek in any way to proscribe "borrowing" or imitation.

There are, however, certain cultural and ultimately ethical conventions that govern the uses made of earlier texts. My problem with *Last Orders* is not just that it is, in its plot and its formal structure, a close imitation of the plot and the formal structure of William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, but that this imitation is pointless and unproductive.

Had it carried some thematic relevance — for example, by challenging or transforming Faulkner's modernist perspectivalism, or by setting up a parallel or contrast between Faulkner's American South and Swift's South of England — the closeness of the imitation would have been perfectly justified. In my judgment it does not carry any such relevance, and the borrowing is neither interesting nor appropriate.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN FROW,
The University of Queensland,
Department of English,
Queensland, QLD 4072.
March 12.

From Mr Roger Betteridge

Sir, Ian Murray ("Writer bred on sound and fury of Deep South", early editions, March 10) gives credence to Faulkner's fabrication that as a Royal Flying Corps pilot he was more than once shot down.

Faulkner served 179 days as a trainee on course 42 at No 4 School of Military Aeronautics, Toronto University. Apparently he never in that time left terra firma. Nevertheless, back in Oxford, Mississippi, after the First World War he affected the stigmata of distinguished combat.

His commission was bogus, his RFC uniform expensively cut in Memphis, his limp affected, his stick finest hickory. The metal plate in his head was also bogus, the consequent loss of memory induced rather by the bottle.

His imagined exploits grew ever more outlandish, from "crashing in France, falling uninjured through a thatched roof into the soup tureen of a peasant's Sunday dinner" to celebrating the Armistice "by taking up a rotary-motored Spad with a crock of Bourbon in the cockpit" (*Faulkner, a biography*, by Joseph Blotner, Random House, 1984).

The excellent Bookshop on the Square in Oxford keeps his original bogus wings insignia, presented by Faulkner. There are other bogus wings in Faulkner's former house and a shop in Oxford.

From time to time on visits I touch the Bookshop's wings, reminding myself that, in the shifting sands of Faulkner scholarship, these at least are "real".

Yours faithfully,
ROGER BETTERIDGE,
2 Cavendish Court,
Shardlow, Derbyshire.
March 10.

Trial by jury

From His Honour Derek Clarkson, QC

Sir The seven-member jury referred to by Mr John Letts (letter, March 11) was in fact used for some years after 1945, I believe until the emergency legislation ceased to have effect. The only exception was at a trial for murder.

Although the juries of seven seem to have worked well enough, trials were then much shorter and less complicated than those of today. The risk, of course, is of illness or some other matter arising during a trial that reduces the number of jurors.

Seven is too few, but I have often thought in recent years that juries of ten would be enough.

Yours sincerely,
DEREK CLARKSON,
72a Cornwall Road,
Harrogate, North Yorkshire.
March 11.

From Mrs J. Melrose, JP

Sir, In local courts, three people sit together and deal with approximately 96 per cent of the crime in this country. They are unpaid lay people living in the local community, dealing with their peers.

Is the discussion on the merits of being tried by a jury a little unbalanced?

Yours sincerely,
JEAN MELROSE,
Tibbets Oak, The Downs,
Leatherhead, Surrey.
March 11.

Weekend Money letters, page 46

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number - 0171-782 5046.

Secret legacy of captured U-boat

From Mr Nicholas Roskill

Sir, Your obituary of Captain A. J. Baker-Cresswell (March 6) dwells at length, and rightly, on the extremely important naval action on May 9, 1941, in which the German submarine *U110* was captured and its Enigma machine fell into our hands. The first volume of the official naval history, *The War at Sea*, written by my father, Captain Stephen Roskill and published in 1954, merely states that *U110* was sunk by the escorts to convoy OB318. The capture of *U110* was such a closely guarded secret that my father told me he never knew about it at the time he was writing the official history.

Some years later he learnt the truth and was allowed to publish *The Secret Capture* (Collins, 1959), which described the action in detail. But even then he could say little about the material which was removed from the U-boat, beyond describing it as being "of priceless value to our Intelligence authorities". The book is dedicated to Captain Baker-Cresswell and to the officers and men of the 3rd Escort Group.

Other Enigma material had been captured in 1941, from the armed trawler *Krebs* in the Lofoten Islands raid on March 4 and from the weather-ship *München* on May 7. My understanding now is that these successes gave us the ability to break many of the German codes quickly by the middle of 1941. The *U110* capture enabled us in addition to read the highly important "officer-only" signals.

There is something of a mystery about the death of Lemp, the captain of *U110*. My father was evidently unaware of the story in your obituary that he was killed by Lewis-gun fire from *HMS Bulldog*. *The Secret Capture* says that he was seen swimming in the water. This statement is supported by a letter to *The Daily Telegraph* (November 11, 1988) from David Balme, who led the boarding party from *HMS Bulldog*: Balme put forward the view that Lemp committed suicide in the water, and wholly refuted a theory that he was shot by the boarding party.

Captain Baker-Cresswell returned Lemp's Iron Cross, found in *U110*, to Lemp's sister after the War.

Yours sincerely,
NICHOLAS ROSKILL,
56 Grove Lane, SE5.
March 6.

From Sir Barry Sheen

Sir, The presence of *U110*, commanded by Kapitänleutnant Lemp, in the vicinity of convoy OB318 was first disclosed when one of her torpedoes struck the *SS Esmond*.

The crew of the *Esmond* took to the boats. I was First Lieutenant of the corvette *Aubrietia* which was stationed close on the starboard side of the *Esmond* (and incidentally took the photograph of *Bulldog* lowering a boat to board *U110* which you used with the obituary). After *Aubrietia* had brought *U110* to the surface with depth charges we rescued the German crew from the water and then the crew of the *Esmond* from their boats.

The Chief Officer of the *Esmond* was Barry Copeland, who had been Third Mate of the *Athenia* when she was sunk by Kapitänleutnant Lemp. Thus during the first two years of the war Barry Copeland served in, and survived the sinking of, two ships by the same German U-boat captain.

Yours faithfully,
BARRY SHEEN,
107 Rivermead Court,
Ranelagh Gardens, SW6.
March 9.

One of a kind

From Dr Jim Hague

Sir, I must disagree with Professor Peter Yates's assertion that members of a clone remain one individual and, if human, should have only one vote and one pension (letter, March 7; see also letter, March 11). On purely practical grounds it would cause me some difficulty if my wife and her identical twin were suddenly held to be legally the same individual.

I can promise your readers they are quite definitely separate individuals. They also tell me that it's rather nice to have a clone.

Yours faithfully,
JIM HAGUE,
10 Romford Road, Epping,
New South Wales, NSW 2121.
March 11.

From Mr Nathan Griggs

Sir, Professor Yates asserts that: "Members of a clone ... remain one individual and, if human, should have only one vote and one pension."

Already, alas, I can see the placards and hear the distant but growing cry: "Equal rights for clones!"

Yours faithfully,
NATHAN GRIGGS,
48 Hillcrest,
Baker Street, Weybridge, Surrey.
March 11.

From Professor George Fink, FRSE

Sir, The report of the first human clone was published in Genesis ii, 21-23:

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the place with flesh instead thereof.

And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from the man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man.

And the man said: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of the Man." (Soncino edition of the Pentateuch and Haftorahs, Dr J. H. Hertz, 1960.)

As succinct and erudite as ever, the Bible takes for granted that the reader will understand that the replacement of the male (Y) by an additional female (X) chromosome in the cells of the male-derived rib will have been such a trivial exercise for God that it is not worth recounting.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE FINK,
23 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh.
March 10.

From Miss Barbara Wanford

Sir, If human babies were produced by cloning from their mothers we could dispense with the whole of the male population. Most of the world's dictators, criminals, scientists and armies would disappear.

There would be no more wars.

However, before rushing headlong into this course of action, a word or two of caution should be noted. Who, for instance, would programme the video?

Yours faithfully,
BARBARA WANFORD,
Flat 16, Seawalls,
Sneyd Park, Bristol.
March 10.

Abbess Héloïse

From Mr J. M. B. Porter

Sir, Peter Abelard was indeed an abbot, for he left his hermitage at the Paraclete when he was elected abbot of St Gildas-de-Rhuys, *ca* 1125-27, but Roger Scruton (book review, March 6) has underestimated the ecclesiastical status of his wife Héloïse.

He is correct in describing her as a prioress, for she held that office at Argenteuil until the nuns there were expelled by Abbot Suger of St Denis, Abelard's former monastery.

After their expulsion, she and some — but not all — of the evicted nuns established a new convent on the site of Abelard's abandoned hermitage and Héloïse became their abbess.

During her lifetime, the Paraclete expanded into a small monastic order with six dependent houses.

Yours faithfully,
J. M. B. PORTER,
University of Nottingham,
Department of History,
University Park, Nottingham.
March 7.

Christian charity

From Mr N. B. C. Evelegh

Sir, Bravo to Libby Purves for her usual humanitarian good sense in her article (March 11) on Cardinal Thomas Winning's offer of help to women contemplating abortion.

However, would we not all respond better to her view that his offer is no more or less than straightforward Christianity and to the Cardinal's position on abortion if he also questioned his Church's discredited position on birth control?

Yours faithfully,
NICK EVELEGH,
Hodges Farmhouse,
Frittenden, Cranbrook, Kent.
March 11.

Cutting the cake

From Lord Healey, CH

Sir, William Waldegrave's article ("Labour's liaison with Leviathan", March 13) was grossly misleading. Far from the Labour Government in the Seventies taking "an ever rising share of the national income", as its Chancellor of the Exchequer I cut public spending as a share of GDP by 7 per cent in five years, leaving my Conservative successor a level of 39.5 per cent — 2 per cent lower than the level today.

As a result the average family in 1978-79 was paying 32.2 per cent of its income in direct and indirect taxation, compared with 34.3 per cent today.

So much for the "tax and spend" image Mr Waldegrave was trying to impose on Labour. I hope he is more scrupulous in his official role as Chief Secretary.

Yours sincerely,
DENIS HEALEY,
House of Lords.
March 14.

By all means

From Mr John O'Reilly

Sir, David Green, President of the Institution of Civil Engineers (letter, March 11), suggests road tunnels as a solution to London's traffic problem. Surely the M25 proves beyond all possible doubt that the only way to improve London travel is to reduce the volume of traffic.

Everyone living in or near big cities requires buses, trams, trains or the Tube in abundance.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN O'REILLY,
Stoneshott,
Meadgate Road,
Roydon, Essex.
March 12.

Farmers who have a love of the land

From Sir John Acland

Sir, Thousands of smaller farmers, despite the fact that Simon Jenkins (article, March 8) seems to include them in his general condemnation of the industry, will agree with him that vast areas of the countryside have been wrecked, their character, flora and fauna destroyed; and that the motivating factor in this destruction has been, and is, greed.

On the farms they maintain, spray and fertilisers are sparingly used; trees, hedgerows and banks are cherished and there is real concern for the preservation of wildlife. Indeed, in numerical terms, there are probably more farmers who are concerned for these things than those who care for none of them.

The problem of course is the common agricultural policy which seems specifically designed to benefit big, already wealthy farmers and to feed their greed, principally through set-aside and arable payments. There is a simple, initial step which could be taken to improve matters: a fixed limit on which subsidies would be paid: anything above a relatively modest acreage would attract nothing.

There is a clear precedent for this on the livestock side. The beef special premium is payable on and up to a maximum of 90 male beasts a year in each of two categories, whatever the size of the farm or the number of animals on it. In addition there is a stocking limit per acre.

Unfortunately the president of the National Farmers' Union opposes this, as do those government ministers who have expressed views on the subject. It is a sorry reflection on them that they do not recognise the obscenity of the sums paid to the big, rich, land barons.

So, while there is much in Simon Jenkins's article to be applauded, he should take more care to ensure that he does not alienate the thousands of farmers who would support his views and do not deserve his generalised strictures.

Yours faithfully,
J. H. B. ACLAND,
Feniton Court, Honiton, Devon.
March 10.

From Mrs Virginia Lort Phillips

Sir, On March 7, 27 Pembrokeshire farming families, including mine, launched their holiday accommodation business at an environmental seminar. We declared that we are "proud of our stewardship, value all the features of the land we manage and the creatures in and on it, and are ready to listen and adapt when modern science shows it to be necessary". We are here to nurture the land, not rape it.

What Simon Jenkins says about the destruction of the countryside may be true in some areas, but on this farm alone we have planted 100,000 trees in recent years and we do not grub out hedges. We respect our tourists, need their business and are encouraged to see them go home understanding better how much we care.

Yet it was Sir Derek Barber, former chairman of the Countryside Commission, who said that an unprofitable farm is an unsustainable farm. Its forced sale to an incomer under a market regime containing no measures for support of conservation leads only to harsher exploitation, not good stewardship.

Nothing would spell greater disaster for the appearance of the countryside and its enjoyment by the public than to force off it, by economic pressure, thousands of families who now care for it, and for planners to regulate its management.

Yours faithfully,
VIRGINIA LORT PHILLIPS,
Knowles Farm, Lawrenny,
Kilgetty, Pembrokeshire.

All over the place

From Squadron Leader D. E. Kleboe, RAF (retd)

Sir, The letter from Mr Harry Ganz (March 8) about his parcel that went to the West Indies instead of west London reminds me of a wartime incident. A pilot ferrying a Lancaster bomber from Canada to England had the misfortune to damage his aircraft against a snowbank in Gander, Newfoundland. As a punishment it was decided that he should spend two months in Greenland at an airfield code-named Bluie West One, normally abbreviated to BW1.

I don't know the details of the administrative process involved but he duly arrived, not in BW1 Greenland but in Trinidad, BWI, where I was the RAF Signals Officer.

Yours faithfully,
D. E. KLEBOE,
68 Ashcombe Road,
Weston-super-Mare, Somerset.
March 10.

Political satyr

From Mr Matthew Still

Sir, The Greek god Pan contributed more to the English language than a wonderful chapter in *The Wind in the Willows* (Philip Howard, March 14). "Panic" is probably an apt use of Pan's legacy when referring to Tony Blair.

Yours sincerely,
M. STILL,
Lockers End,
Overton Road, Ibstock, Leicester.
March 14.

COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 14: His Excellency Pehin Dato Jaya Abdul Latif was received in audience by The Queen and presented the Letters of Recall of his predecessor and his own Letters of Credence as Ambassador from Brunei Darussalam to the Court of St James's.

Datin Halimah Jaya was also received by Her Majesty.

Sir John Coles (Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) was present.

The Rt Hon Sir Patrick Mayhew MP (Secretary of State for Northern Ireland) had an Audience of The Queen.

This afternoon The Queen visited Reed's School, Cobham, and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey (Mr Richard Thornton), the Chairman of Governors (the Viscount Bridgeman), the Headmaster (Mr David Prince) and the Mayor of Elmbridge (Councillor Hugh Ashton).

The Duke of Edinburgh, President Emeritus, World Wide Fund for Nature — WWF International, this morning attended a board meeting of World Wide Fund for Nature — Japan at the Tokyo City Club. His Royal Highness, Founder and Chairman of the International Trustees, later attended a Luncheon for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Association at the Intercontinental Hotel, Tokyo Bay.

The Duke of Edinburgh, President Emeritus, this afternoon gave a Press Conference for World Wide Fund for Nature. His Royal Highness was later received by The Emperor and Empress of Japan at the Imperial Palace.

The Duke of Edinburgh this evening attended a Dinner for Word Wide Fund for Nature.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 13: The Duke of York this evening presented the Biennial Awards for the Association of Business Sponsorship of the Arts, Northern Ireland, at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast, and was received by the Rt Hon Michael Ancram MP (Minister of State for Northern Ireland) and Mr Colin Anderson (Vice-Lord-Lieutenant of the County Borough of Belfast).

March 14: The Duke of York, Patron, the Badminton Association of England, this evening attended the All England Badminton Championships at the National Indoor Arena, Birmingham, and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of West Midlands (Mr Robert Taylor).

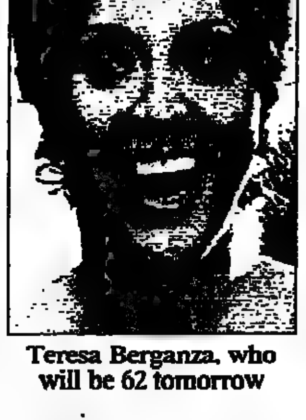
BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 14: The Prince Edward, Chairman, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Special Projects Group, this evening held a Reception at Buckingham Palace followed by a Concert given by Award participants at the Porchester Hall, Queensway, London.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 14: The Princess Royal, President, British Knitting and Clothing Export Council, this morning visited John Scott Nichol Limited, Old Station Close, Shepshead, Loughborough, and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Leicestershire (Mr Timothy Brooks). Her Royal Highness later visited Paul James Knitwear Limited, Hill Street, Barwell, Leicestershire.

The Princess Royal this afternoon visited Leicester General Hospital and opened the new Radiology Department. Her Royal Highness later opened a new Area Police Station in Keyham Lane, Hamilton, Leicestershire.

YORK HOUSE
ST JAMES'S PALACE
March 14: The Duke of Kent, Patron, the Year of Engineering Success, this morning attended the launch of Set Week, at Imperial College, Exhibition Road, London.

Weekend birthdays



Teresa Berganza, who will be 62 tomorrow

TODAY
Mr David Alton, MP, 46; Mr Alexander Bernstein, former chairman, Granada Group, 61; Dr D.R.W. Bryer, director, Oxfam, 53; Miss Isobel Buchanan, soprano, 43; Mr P.J. Butler, former senior partner, KPMG Peat Marwick, 68; Sir Jack Callard, former chairman, British Home Stores, 84; Lord Constantine of Stanmore, 87; Mr Frank Dobson, MP, 57; Professor Sir James Dunbar-Nasmith, architect, 70; Mr John Duttine, actor, 49; the Right Rev John Gibbs, former Bishop of Coventry, 80; Professor John Gillingham, neurologist, 81; Ms Sunetra Gupta, author, 32; Earl Haig, 79; Mrs Deirdre Hutton, chairman, Scottish Consumer Council, 48; Sir Leonard Knowles, former Chief Justice of the Bahamas, 81; Sir John Lacy, former general director of party campaigning, Conservative Central Office, 69; Mr Mike Love, singer, 53; Admiral Sir Raymond Lygo, 73; Professor Joan Mitchell, economist, 77; Mr Michael Moore, former chairman, NSPCC, 61; Mr Robert Nye, novelist and poet, 58; Mr Ben Okri, author, 38; Sir Philip Powell, CH, architect, 76; Lord Rendlesham, 82; the Right Rev Michael Scott-Joynt, Bishop of Winchester, 54; Mr Gavin Stamp, architectural historian and writer, 49; Sir Roger Tomkys, Master, Pembroke College, Cambridge, 60; Mr David Wall, former Director, Royal Academy of Dancing, 51.

TOMORROW
Mr Matthew Bannister, Director, BBC Radio 1, 40; Miss Teresa Berganza, mezzo-soprano, 62; Mr Bernardo Bertolucci, film director, 56; the Right Rev Hugo de Waal, Bishop of Thetford, 62; Sir Philip Foreman, mechanical engineer, 74; Air Chief Marshal Sir Christopher Foxley-Norris, 80; Sir Ewart Jones, FRS, chemist, 86; Sir Anthony Kenny, former President, British Academy, 66; Mr Leo McKern, actor, 77; Miss Georgina Nayler, director, Pilgrim Trust, 38; Miss Kate Nelligan, actress, 46; Mr Roger Norrington, conductor, 63; Mr R.G. Puttick, former chairman, Taylor Woodrow, 81; Miss Bridget Rowe, managing director of *Sunday Mirror* and *The People*, 47; Mr John Watts, racehorse trainer, 55.

Anniversaries

Today
BIRTHS: Andrew Jackson, general, 7th American President 1829-37, Waxhaw, Carolina, 1767; William Lamb, 2nd Viscount Melbourne, Prime Minister 1834 and 1835-41, London, 1779; Dame Madge Kendal, actress, Cleethorpes, 1849; Lady Augusta Gregory, dramatist, poet and director of Abbey Theatre, Dublin, Roxborough, Co Galway, 1852.

DEATHS: Julius Caesar, assassinated, Rome, 44BC; Tobias Rustat, Yeoman of the Robes to Charles II, London, 1694; Otto von Kotzebue, navigator, Reval, Russia, 1846; Luigi Cherubini, composer, Paris, 1852; James Sylvester, mathematician, London, 1897; Sir Henry Bessemer, engineer, inventor, steel manufacturer, London, 1898; Walter Crane, illustrator, Horsham, 1915; August von Wasserman, bacteriologist, Berlin, 1925; Nevil Sidgwick, chemist, Oxford, 1952; Aristotle Onassis, shipping magnate, Paris, 1975; Dame Rebecca West, writer, London, 1983.

The Cincinnati Red Stockings became the first all-professional baseball team, 1869.

A bomb planted by Fenians exploded in the offices of *The Times*, Queen Victoria Street, London, 1883.

American entrepreneur G.S. Selfridge opened London's first department store on a six-acre site in Oxford Street, 1909.

Nicholas II (the last Russian Emperor), abdicated, 1917.

Tomorrow
BIRTHS: Pieter Hooft, poet, Amsterdam, 1581; Caroline Herschel, astronomer, Hanover, Germany, 1750; James Madison, 4th American President 1809-17, Port Conway, 1751; Matthew Flinders, navigator, Donington, Lincolnshire, 1774; George Ohm, physicist, Erlanger, Germany, 1787; Rosa Bonheur, animal painter, Bordeaux, 1822; Camilo Branco, novelist, Lisbon, 1825.

DEATHS: Alexander III, King of Scotland 1249-86, Burntisland, Fyfe, 1286; Giovanni Pergolesi, composer, Pozzuoli, Italy, 1736; Jean Baptiste Rousseau, poet, Brussels, 1741; Robert Surtees, novelist, Brighton, 1864; Aubrey Beardsley, illustrator, Menton, 1898; John James Macleod, physiologist, pioneer of insulin, Nobel laureate 1923, Aberdeen, 1935; Sir Austen Chamberlain, Foreign Secretary 1924-29, Nobel Peace laureate, 1925, London, 1937; Constantin Brancusi, sculptor, Paris, 1957; William Henry Beveridge, Baron Beveridge, pioneer of social security, Oxford, 1963.

The American Military Academy was established at West Point, 1802.

First liquid-propelled rocket was launched by the American physicist Dr Robert Goddard, 1926.

Adolf Hitler renounced the Treaty of Versailles and introduced conscription, 1935.

The Queen opened the new London Bridge, 1973.

Luncheons, dinners

Service luncheons

RN Staff College Greenwich
A dinner was held last night at the Royal Naval College Greenwich to mark the cessation of Royal Naval Staff Training at Greenwich. Commodore A.L. Chilton, presided. Past commandants, directors, directing and support staff and civilian tutors of the college were present.

The Green Howards
Brigadier Richard Dannatt, Colonel of The Green Howards (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment) presided at a luncheon for officers and their guests held yesterday at the Queen's Club.

Luncheons

Baroness Flather
Baroness Flather was the host at a luncheon given by the Executive Committee of the United Kingdom branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association at the House of Lords yesterday to bid farewell to the Speakers, Deputy Speakers and Members of Commonwealth Parliaments attending the 1997 Parliamentary seminar at Westminster.

Sir Ivan Lawrence, QC, chairman of the executive committee, presided.

Mid Atlantic Club
M Pierre Lellouche, Special Adviser to the President of France, was the guest of honour and speaker at a luncheon of the Mid Atlantic Club held yesterday at Dartmouth House. Lord Ezra was in the chair.

Service dinners

Oxford University OTC
General Sir Michael Rose, Adjutant General and Honorary Colonel Oxford University OTC, was the principal guest and speaker at the annual dinner held last night at Keble College, Oxford. Lieutenant-Colonel W.A.H. Townend, Commanding Officer, presided.

The Vice-Chancellor of Reading University and the Principal of the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, were among the guests.

TAVRA for North West of England and Isle of Man
Colonel John Timmins presided at a dinner of TAVRA for North West of England and Isle of Man held last night at the Officers' Mess, Altcar Training Camp, to mark the Dining Out of Colonel Sir Simon Towneley, Captain F.K. Bennett, RNR, and Colonel B.A.G. King.

Dinners

Cordwainers' Company
The Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs attended the annual Past Wardens' dinner of the Cordwainers' Company held last night at Law Society's Hall.

Mr Timothy Weber-Brown, Master, presided, assisted by the Wardens. The Lord Mayor, the Master of the Leathersellers' Company, and Mr Clive Willcocks also spoke.

Viscount Allenby
Viscount and Viscountess Allenby last night entertained members and guests of the International Cultural Exchange at dinner at the House of Lords.

The High Commissioner for India and Mrs Singhvi were the guests of honour. Mr Owen Luder, President of RIBA, was among others present.

Merchant Taylors' School, Crosby
Mr Simon Dawkins, Headmaster of Merchant Taylors' School, Crosby, and President of the Old Crosbeians, presided at the annual London dinner held last night at the East India, Devonshire, Sports and Public Schools Club. Lieutenant-Colonel Harrison Cail and the Clerk of the Merchant Taylors' Company also spoke.

Lamb Chambers
Master John Leslie was the guest of honour at a dinner held on March 7 at The Travellers Club, Pall Mall, given by the members of Lamb Chambers to mark his appointment as Queen's Bench Master. Mr Jonathan Cole presided and Mr Jeremy Carey proposed the toast.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr A.G. Lucas and Miss E.T. Schmitz
The engagement is announced and the marriage will take place in July in Pine Plains, New York, between George, youngest son of the Hon Ivor and Mrs Lucas, of Wimbledon, London, and Elisabeth, eldest daughter of Mr Charles Schmitz, of Washington DC, and Mrs Barbara Putnam, of New York City.

Mr J.J. Hale and Miss A.L. Heys
The engagement is announced between John Justin, son of Professor Sir John and Lady Hale, of Twickenham, Middlesex, and Amanda Louise, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Basil Heys, of East Molesey, Surrey.

Mr S.P. Booth and Miss J.A. Veale
The engagement is announced between Steven, eldest son of Mr T.P. Booth, of Newton Abbott, and Mrs J.E. Booth, of Ascot, and Juliet, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs J.C. Veale, of Ascot.

Mr D.E.P. Francis and Miss J.V. Abbott
The engagement is announced between Damien, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Kenneth Francis, of Ham Common, Surrey, and Jane, eldest daughter of Canon and Mrs Nigel Abbott, of Much Hadham Rectory, Hertfordshire.

Mr A.M.S. Hindmarch and Miss V.J. Noel
The engagement is announced between Arthur, only son of Mr and Mrs Michael Hindmarch, of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, and Victoria, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Anthony Noel, of Yeovil, Somerset.

Mr J. McLaughlin and Miss A. Osborne
The engagement is announced between James, son of Mr Jim McLaughlin and the late Rosemary McLaughlin, of Merryanbone North, Nyngan, NSW, and Abigail, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Brian Osborne, of Ellendon, Bungendore, NSW.

Mr C.P. O'Shaughnessy and Miss C.A. Jackson
The engagement is announced between Charles, son of Mrs Michael Power, of Cadley, Wiltshire, and Mr David O'Shaughnessy, of Shiplake, Oxfordshire, and Caroline, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Alan Jackson, of South Holmwood, Surrey.

Mr R.E. Page and Miss E.V. Jeffrey
The engagement is announced between Robert, only son of Mr and Mrs Brian Page, of Stafford, and Emma Victoria, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Gordon Jeffrey, of Var, France.

Mr B.A. Runciman and Miss C.J.C. Stapleton
The engagement is announced between Ben, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Owen Runciman, of Ely, and Janey, younger daughter of the Dean of Carlisle and Mrs Henry Stapleton.

Mr P.T. Stewart-Blacker and Miss I.M. Macpherson
The engagement is announced between Peter, elder son of Mr and Mrs Patrick Stewart-Blacker, of Rosemount House, Blairgowrie, Perthshire, and Mary, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Neil Macpherson, of Craggie House, Daviot, Inverness.

Marriage

Mr G.P. Wear and Miss S.E. Young
The marriage took place on Friday, March 14, at Ruthin Castle, North Wales, of Gareth Paul Wear, of Kearsley, Manchester, and Sara Elizabeth Young, of Tisbury, Wiltshire. The honeymoon will be spent in Canada.

Church news

Canon Anthony Robinson, Team Rector, parish of the Resurrection, Leicester, Rural Dean of Christianity North and an honorary canon of Leicester Cathedral, has been appointed Archdeacon of Pontefract, in the diocese of Wakefield. He succeeds the Ven John Flack.

Other appointments include:
Canon Ian Bunting, diocesan director of ordinands (Southwell); to be also the Bishop of Southwell's research officer.

Memorial service

Lord Kinnaird
A memorial service for Lord Kinnaird was held yesterday in Rossie Priory Chapel, Perthshire. The Right Rev Ted Luscombe officiated and gave an address.

Mr James Best and Mr John Staib, sons-in-law, read the lessons. The Hon Mrs Best, daughter, gave a reading.

Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators

The following have been installed officers of the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators for the ensuing year:

Master, Mr Ronald Bridge; Master-elect, Captain Rodley Fulton, Wardens, Air Marshal Sir Donald Hall, Captain John Hutchinson and Mr Arthur Thorning.

Christ's Hospital

To mark the Centenary of the Laying of the Foundation Stone, Christ's Hospital Partnership is proposing to publish a Directory of All Old Blues. If you have not yet received details, please contact the Partnership Office on: 01403-211293.

Appointments

Latest appointments include:
Miss Glynne Evans, 52, at present on sabbatical at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Chile in succession to Mr Frank Wheeler, who will be retiring from the Diplomatic Service. She will take up her post at the end of May.

Professor Christopher Frayling, in his capacity as Rector of the Royal College of Art, to be an ex-officio member of the board of trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum. **Mrs Anne Heseltine** and **Professor Christopher White** to be trustees of the museum for a five-year period.

Church services tomorrow

Fifth Sunday in Lent

ST ALBAN CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 Parish Euch, New English Hymnal, Canon Ritson; 11.15 M, Benedictus (Stanford in B flat), Rev M McLean; 12.30 HC; 6.30 E, Humfrey in E minor, Chaplain.

ST ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL, ABERDEEN: 8 HC; 10.15 S Euch, Jackson in G, Of the glorious body (Plainsong), Provost; 6.30 ES, Sumsion in G, Lamentations of Jeremiah Part II (Tallis).

ARMAGH CATHEDRAL: 10 HC; 11 S Euch, St Margaret's Service (Gibbs), Praise to thee Lord Jesus (Schutz), Dean; 3.15 Festal E for Eve of St Patrick, Stanford in C, Ven G McCamley.

BANGOR CATHEDRAL: 10 HC; 11 Choral C, Missa Collegium Regale (Howells), Litany (Walton); 3.30 Choral E & Installation, Kelly in C, Insanae et vanae curae (Haydn).

BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL: 9 MP; 9.15 HC; 11 Choral Euch & Erection of Cross, O quam gloriosum (Victoria); 3.45 EP; 4 Music & Readings for Passiontide.

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.15 Choral M, Faithful Cross (King John of Portugal), Canon Hindley; 10.30 Euch, Mass for five voices (Byrd), O vos omnes (Gesualdo), Canon Galliers; 4 Choral E.

BRECON CATHEDRAL: 8 Holy Euch; 11 M, Benedictus (Stanford in B flat), God so loved the world (Goss), Canon R Williams; 3.30 E, Salvator mundi Salva nos (Blow).

BRISTOL CATHEDRAL: 7.40 M; 8 HC; 10 Choral Euch, Messe Solennelle (Langlais), O for a closer walk with God (Stanford), Canon J Simpson; 3.30 Choral E, Wesley in E, The heavens are telling (Haydn), Rev E Wilkinson.

BANGOR CATHEDRAL: 8 Holy Euch; 9.45 Boreol Weddi; 11 Choral Litany & Euch, Ireland in C, Lord let me know mine end (Greene); 3.15 Choral E, Plainsong, Lamentation (Bairstow); 5 Cymun Bendigaid.

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 M, Rev R Marsh; 11 S Euch, Vaughan Williams in G minor, O vos omnes (Casals), Rev V Stock; 3.15 E, St John's Service (Hendrie); 6.30 Compline, Rev R Symon.

CARLISLE CATHEDRAL: 7.45 M; 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Collegium Regale (Howells), Here O my Lord I see thee face to face (Self), Canon D Weston; 3 E, Short Service (Gibbons).

CHELMSFORD CATHEDRAL: 7.30 MP; 8 HC, Rev I Moody; 9.30 Euch, Canon D Knight; 11.15 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Gabrieli), Holy Eucharist (Harris), Acting Provost; 6 Choral E, Darke in A minor, Rev B Snaith.

CHESTER CATHEDRAL: 7.45 L; 8 HC; 10 Choral Euch, Collegium Regale (Howells), Canon Conway; 11.30 Choral M, Benedicite (Harris in A), Canon T Dennis; 3.30 Choral E, Stabat mater dolorosa (Schubert); 6.30 ES, Canon T Dennis.

CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M, Benedicite (Harris in A), Benedictus (Plainsong), Crux fidelis (John IV of Portugal), Precentor; 11 S Euch, Little Organ Mass (Haydn), Salvator mundi (Tallis), Dean; 3.30 E, Let us lift up our heart (Wesley).

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, Oxford: 8 HC; 10 M & Sermon, Miserere (Palestrina), Canon Webster; 11.15 S Euch, Missa Qual Dona (Lassus), Thou knowest Lord the secrets (Purcell), Canon O'Donovan; 6 E, Gloucester Service (Howells), O Lord God (Child).

COVENTRY CATHEDRAL: 7.40 MP; 8 Communion; 10.30 Euch, Litany (Wright), Let all the angels (Handel), Canon C Baxter; 5 Passiontide Meditation.

DERBY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.45 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Palestrina), Salvator Mundi (Tallis), Rev R Parsons; 6 Choral E, Whitlock in G, Mr A Flintham.

DURHAM CATHEDRAL: 8 HC, Precentor; 10 M, Lamentation (Bairstow), Praise to thee Lord Jesus (Schutz), Canon D Brown; 11 15 HC, Collegium Regale (Howells), Canon D Hodgson; 3.30 E, Stanford in B flat, Greater love hath no man than this (Ireland).

ELY CATHEDRAL: 8.15 HC, Dean; 10.30 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Kodaly), Dean; 3.45 E, Collegium Regale (Howells).

EXETER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch, Purge me O Lord (Tallis), Mass for four voices (Byrd), Canon D Ison; 11.15 M, Lamentation (Bairstow), O Saviour of the world (Ouseley); 3 E, Noble in B minor, Salvator mundi (Blow); 6.30 Special Service, Stabat Mater (Schubert).

GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC, Canon T Chanter; 9.45 S Euch, Mass for Four Voices (Byrd), Crucifixus (Lotti), Canon J Schofield; 11.15 M, Te Deum in E (Britten), God so loved the world (Stainer), Rev Sir J Alleyne.

HEREFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Euch, Collegium Regale (Howells); 11.30 M, Lamentation (Bairstow), Jubilate (Moeran in E flat), Hear my prayer (Purcell); 3.30 E, New College Service (Drayton).

LEICESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M; 10.30 Euch, Collegium Regale (Howells), O Saviour of the world (Goss); 4 Choral E, Walmisley in D minor, Canon J Leonard.

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Messe Solennelle (Vierne), Lamentation (Bairstow), Dean; 3.30 E & Staffordshire Civic Service, Blessed city heavenly Salem (Bairstow), Bishop of Lichfield.

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL: 7.45 Litany; 8 HC; 9.30 S Euch, Kyrie Sanctus & Benedictus (Durufle), Agnus Dei (Missa in simplicitate) (Langlais), Subdean; 11.15 M, The Lamentation, Crown of Roses (Tchaikovsky), Precentor; 12.30 HC; 3.45 E, Ye now are sorrowful (Brahms); 5.15 Recital.

LLANDAFF CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M & Litany; 8 Holy Euch, Dean; 9 Parish Euch, Dean; 11 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Leighton), Salvator Mundi (Tallis), Canon; 12.15 Holy Euch; 3.30 Choral E, Second Service (Leighton); 6.30 Parish E & Sermon, Rev Dr J Baldwin.

MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8.45 M; 9 Euch; 10.30 S Euch, Hear my prayer (Purcell), Archdeacon of Manchester; 6.30 E, Lord let me know mine end (Greene), Canon A Radcliffe.

NORWICH CATHEDRAL: 7.30 MP; 8, 9.15 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Mass in G minor (V Williams), God so loved the world (Stainer), Canon M Perham; 3.30 EP; 5.30 Arvo Part's of St John Passion.

PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL: 8.15 HC; 9.30 M, Benedictus (Stanford in C); 10.30 Euch, Missa Aeterna Christi Munera (Palestrina), Praise to thee Lord Jesus (Schutz), Treasurer; 3.30 E, Gray in F minor, Christus factus est (Bruckner).

PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 Parish Communion, Mass of St Thomas (Thorne), Canon J Hedges; 11 S Euch, Litany (Loosemore), Ave verum (Byrd), Canon J Hedges; 6.30 Thanksgiving Service for work of Corrymeela, Most Rev Dr S Brady.

RIPON CATHEDRAL: 8 Euch, Dean; 9.30 Parish Euch, Missa Octavi Toni (Lassus), Rev P Conway; 11.30 M, Benedicite (Sumsion in B flat), Benedictus (Stanford in C), God so loved the world (Stainer); 12.30 Euch, Canon H Garside; 5.30 E, Third Service (Tomkins), Canon M Glanville-Smith.

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 M, Lamentations (Bairstow), Hide not thou thy face (Farrant), Dean; 3.15 E, God be in my head (Rutter), Jackson in G, The wilderness (Wesley); 8 King's School Choral Concert.

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC, Very Rev D Watson; 10 Euch, Litany (Tallis), Collegium Regale (Howells), Tantum ergo sacramentum (Durufle); 11.30 M, Benedicite in B flat (Sumsion), Call to remembrance (Farrant), Canon J Davies; 3 E, Dyson in D.

SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 Judges' Service, Rt Rev I Harland, Ascribe unto the Lord (Wesley); 4.30 Hands on Confirmation group; 6.30 S Euch, Missa O quam gloriosum (Victoria), Let all mortal flesh (Bairstow), Canon T Page.

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL: 9 Euch, Rev R Royle; 11 Choral Euch, Darke in F, In ieiunio et fletu (Tallis), Crucifixus (Lotti), Rev R White; 3 Choral E, Harwood in A flat, O Lorde the maker of alle thing (Joubert), Provost.

SOUTHWELL MINSTER: 7.45 Litany; 8 HC; 9.30 Parish Communion, Sumsion in B flat, Harwood in A flat, Greater love (Ireland), Chancellor; 3.15 Music & Readings for Passiontide; 4.30 E; 5.45 Compline.

TRURO CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9 M; 10 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Palestrina), Chancellor; 3 EP; 6 Crucifixion.

WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC, Canon G Nairn-Briggs; 9.15 Parish Communion, It is a thing most wonderful (Ireland), Canon R Capper; 11 Solemn Euch, Missa Brevis (Walton), Lamentation (Bairstow), Provost; 4 E, Harwood in A flat, Canon D Baxter.

WELLS CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch, Missa quam gloriosum (Victoria), Rev G Farran; 11.30 M, Benedicite (Sumsion in B flat), Benedictus (Stanford in A), Call to remembrance (Farrant); 3 E, Jackson in G, Faire is the heaven (Harris), Rev P de Lucas.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY: 8 HC; 10 M, Lamentation (Bairstow), O saviour of the world (Ouseley), Canon A Harvey; 11.15 Euch, Missa trinitatis sanctae (Grier), O sacrum convivium (Vann), Canon A Harvey; 3 E, Purcell in G minor, Crucifixus a 6 (Lotti), Rev B Duckworth; 5.45 Recital; 6.30 Evening, Rev J Goodall.

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL: 10.30 Solemn Mass, Mass for five voices (Berkeley), Remember not Lord our offences (Purcell), Bishop C O'Reilly; 2.45 Recital; 3.30 Solemn V & B.

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 M, Benedictus (Fauxbourdons) (Tallis), Salvator mundi (Howells), The Archdeacon; 11.30 Euch, Messe solennelle (Vierne), Toccata in B flat minor (Vierne); 3.30 E, Watson in E, Thou wilt keep him (Wesley), Rev A Edmeads; 5.30 E, Quarti toni (Palestrina).

YORK MINSTER: 8, 8.45 HC; 10 S Euch, Missa Bell' Amfitrit' altera (Lassus), Rev Dr J Toy; 11.30 M, The Lamentation (Bairstow), Benedictus in B flat (Stanford); 4 E, Sumsion in G, Crux fidelis (John IV of Portugal); 7.30 Passiontide Concert, Requiem (Durufle).

ST ASAPH CATHEDRAL, Clwyd: 8 HC; 11 Choral Euch, Darke in A minor, Nolo mortem peccatoris (Morley), Canon J Thelwell; 3.30 Choral E.

ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9 Cymun Bendigaid, Yr Is-Ganon; 9.30 Parish Euch, Dean; 11.15 Choral M, Lamentation (Bairstow), Jubilate (Noble in B minor), Dean; 6 Choral E, Stanford in G, Minor Canon.

ST EDMUNDSBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC, Canon S Pettitt; 10 S Euch, Mathias in C, Short Service (Wills), Plorans ploravit (Ferrabosco), Ex ore innocentium (Ireland), Canon C Catton; 11.30 Choral M, Lamentations (Bairstow), Crucifixus (Lotti); 3.30 Choral E.

ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL, Southwark: 8, 10, 6 LM; 11.30 Solemn M, Mass for four voices (Byrd), Fr P Turner; 4.30 Nigerian prayer ministry; 5 Stations of the Cross.

ST GILES' CATHEDRAL, Edinburgh: 8 Morning HC, Minister; 10 Morning HC, Minister, Collegium Regale (Howells); 11.30 Lamentations (Bairstow); 6 Lenten Address & Music; 8 Evening, Rev J Williams.

ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL: 8 Euch; 10.30 Euch, Missa Orbis factor, Crown of Thorns (Tchaikovsky); 3.30 Choral E, Second Service (Leighton); 6.30 Compline.

ST MACHAR'S CATHEDRAL, Old Aberdeen: 11 Morning, 6 Evening, both Rev R Frazer.

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, London: 8 HC; 8.45 M; 11 S Euch, Missa Bell' Amfitrit' altera (Lassus), O Saviour of the world (Ouseley), Rev J Lees; 3.15 E, Second Service (Leighton), Christus factus est (Bruckner), Canon S Oliver; 5 Recital.

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL, Ennismore Gardens, London, SW7: 10.30 Divine Liturgy, Kievan and traditional polyphony, Diocesan Bishop Met Anthony.

ALL SAINTS, Margaret Street, W1: 8, 5.15 LM; 10.20 MP; 11 HM, Messa II a 4 (Monteverdi), Rev I Davies; 6 E & B, Short Service (Causton), Baroness James of Holland.

ALL SOULS, Langham Place, W1: 9 Communion Service, Rev Dr J Stott; 6.30 Preb R Bewes.

THE ASSUMPTION, Warwick Street, W1: 11 Missa Iste confessor (Palestrina), Vivo ergo dicit Dominus (Lobo), Animam meam dilectam (Vittoria).

CHELSEA OLD CHURCH, SW3: 8 HC; 10 Children; 11 M, Greater love hath no man (Ireland), Rev Dr P Elvy; 12.15 HC; 6 E, Rev D Bean.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH, Curzon St, W1: 11 Sunday School.

CROWN COURT CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, Covent Garden: 11.15 Rev J McMahon; 6.30 Rev S Hood.

FARM STREET, W1: 8, 9.30, 12.30, 4.15, 6.15 LM; 11 HM.

HOLY TRINITY BROMPTON: 9 ASB HC, Rev S Downham; 11 Morning, Mr J Jennings; 5, 7.30 Informal, Rev S Millar.

THE ORATORY, Brompton Road: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Mass, Mass for four voices (Byrd), O bone Jesu (Parsons) 12.30, 4.30, 7 Mass; 3.30 V & B, Miserere nostri (Tallis).

ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH, Iverna Gdns: 11 Holy Mass, Archbishop Y Gizirian.

WESLEY'S CHAPEL, City Road, EC2: 9.45 HC; 11 Morning, Mr N Muchopa.

WESTMINSTER CENTRAL HALL (Methodist), SW1: 11 HC, Rev E Fletcher; 6.30 Rev E Stafford.

ST ANNE AND ST AGNES (Lutheran), Gresham St, EC2: 11 Choral Euch, Peter Krogull; 7 Bach Vespers, Himmelskonig sei willkommen (Bach), Rev P Schmiege.

ST AUGUSTINE, 117 Queen's Gate, SW7: 8.30 HC; 11 HC Sung, Messe Douce Memoire (Lassus), A Litany (Walton).

ST BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT, Smithfield: 9 HC; 11 Choral Euch, Missa brevis (Britten), Ave verum corpus (Faure), Rector; 6.30 E, Fauxbourdons (Byrd), Rector.

ST BRIDE'S, Fleet Street, EC4: 11 Choral M & Euch, Lamentation (Bairstow), Noble in B minor, Salvator mundi (Tallis), Crucifixus (Lotti), Canon J Oates; 6.30 Choral E.

ST CLEMENT DANES: 11 Mosquito Aircrew Association, Benedictus (Stanford in B flat), Give us the wings of faith (Bullock), Right Rev Monsignor E Hill; 12.30 HC.

ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, Pont Street, SW1: 11 Very Rev Dr W Macmillan; 6.30 Rev W Cairns.

ST ETHELDREDA'S, Ely Place: 11 S Mass, Messe en Sol (Dubois), Vexilla Regis (Liszt), Tenebrae Factae Sunt (Victoria).

ST GEORGE'S, Hanover Square, W1: 8.30 HC; 11 S Euch, Sumsion in F, Rector.

ST JAMES'S, Garlickhythe, EC4: 10.30 S Euch (1662), John Paul, Rector.

ST JAMES'S, Sussex Gardens: 8 Euch; 10.30 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Gabrieli), Kommsusses Kreuz (Bach), Rev B Wilson; 6 Choral E, Short Service (Byrd).

ST JAMES'S, Piccadilly: 8.30 HC; 11 S Euch, Rev H Valentine; 5.45 EP.

ST JOHN'S, Stratford E15: 11 Family Communion, Fantasia in G (Bach), Rev D Richards; 6.30 EP & Praise, Rev D Richards.

ST LUKE'S, Chelsea, SW3: 10.30 S Euch, Drop drop slow tears (Walton), Rev N Roberts; 12.15 HC; 6.30 E, Mr J Harding.

ST MARK'S, Regent's Park Rd, NW1: 8 HC; 9.45 Family Communion; 11 S Euch, Missa L'Hora Passa (Viadana), Lamentations (Bairstow), Rev D Bean.

ST MARGARET'S, Westminster: 11 S Euch, Missa aeterna Christi munera (Palestrina), Miserere mei (Allegri), Rev B Fenton.

ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, WC2: 8 HC (1662); 9.45 Euch, Rev C Herbert; 11.30 Visitors, Rev A Hurst; 12.30 HC; 2.45 Chinese, Rev J Bennett; 5 Choral E; 6.30 Evening.

ST MARY ABBOTS CHURCH, Kensington W8: 8, 12.30 HC; 9.30 Parish Euch, Very Rev Dr J Moses, Dean of St Paul's Cathedral; 11.15 Choral M, Vicar; 6.30 E, Rev M Fuller.

ST MARY'S, Bourne Street, SW1: 9, 10, 7 LM; 11 HM, Missa brevis (Leighton), Fr B Scott; 6 Solemn E & B.

ST MARY-THE-VIRGIN, Primrose Hill: 8 HC; 10.30 Parish Euch, Mass (Plainsong), Rev D Jones; 6 Taize; 7 Concert, Requiem (Faure).

ST MARYLEBONE, Marylebone Road, W1: 8 HC; 11 Choral Euch, Missa Cuiusvis Toni (Ockeghem), O Crux Ave (Philips), Rector.

ST MICHAEL'S, Cornhill, EC3: Darke in A minor, O nata lux (Tallis), Fr G Morgan.

ST PAUL'S, Wilton Place, SW1: 8, 9 HC; 11 Solemn Euch, Short Service (Tallis), O vos omnes (Casals), When David heard (Weelkes), Rev C Courtauld.

ST PETER'S, Eaton Square, SW1: 8.15 HC; 10 Family Euch; 11 S Euch, Missa in illo (Monteverdi), Fr A Childwick.

ST STEPHEN'S, Gloucester Road, SW7: 9 LM; 11 HM, Le bien que j'ai (Goudinel), Custodi me domine (Lassus), Peccantem mme quotidie (Morales).

ST GEORGE'S CHAPEL: 8.30 HC; 10.45 M & Sermon, Short Service (Gibbons), Rev A Gyle; 11.45 S Euch, Ave Jesu Christe (Philips); 5.15 Choral E, Magnificat (Buxtehude).

CHAPEL ROYAL OF ST PETER AD VINCULA, Tower of London: 9.15 HC, Rev P Abram; 11 M & Sermon, Short Service (Weelkes), Rev P Abram.

CHAPEL ROYAL, St James's Palace: 8.30 HC; 11.15 MP, Like as the hart (Howells), Canon M Mingins.

CHAPEL ROYAL, Hampton Court Palace: 8.30 HC (1662); 11 M, Dyson in F, Fauxboudons (Willan), Jehovah quam multi sunt hostes (Purcell); 3.30 E, First Service (Weelkes).

GROSVENOR CHAPEL, South Audley Street, W1: 8.15 HC; 11 S Euch, Missa Trahe me post te (Victoria), Rev S Hobbs.

QUEEN'S CHAPEL OF THE SAVOY, WC2: 11 S Euch, Stanford in G, Rev S Affleck.

THE TEMPLE CHURCH, Fleet Street: 8.30 HC; 11.15 MP, Lamentations of Jeremiah (Bairstow), Benedictus (Ireland in C), Master.

GUARDS CHAPEL, Wellington Barracks: 11 M, O vos omnes (Correa), Band of Scots Guards, Rev T Cole; 12 HC.

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The blessings of your father are stronger than the blessings of the eternal mountains and the bounty of the everlasting hills. Genesis 49 : 26

BIRTHS

CHURCHILL - On March 3rd 1997, to Charlotte (née Neame) and Richard, a son, Harry Alexander, a brother for Beatrice.

GITTOS - On March 11th to Géraldine (née Ducoin) and Tim, a son Artur Timothy Jean.

HATCH - On 9th March 1997 to Michelle and Andrew, a son Jacob Owen, a brother for Thomas.

HUEHNS PAHL - On February 25th to Tanya and Clemens, a daughter, Annabel. With thanks to St Mary's Hospital, London.

LEDGARD - On February 26th, at home, to Sophie and Mark, a daughter, Katie, a sister for Lucy.

PAGE - On 3rd February 1997, to Amanda (née Seaton) and Matthew, a beautiful daughter, Henrietta Jasmine Alberta.

SIMPSON - On 12th March 1997, to Cameron and Jane, a son Andrew Alexander James, a brother for Richard. Mother and child both well.

STINTON - On 9th March at John Radcliffe, Oxford, to Clova (née Stuart-Hamilton) and Michael, a son Hector George Donald, a brother for Pandora and Cecilia.

STOLL - On March 13th, to Sara (née Pringle) and Jonny, a son, Benjamin Bernard, a brother for Laura, Isaac and Sam.

VAN HORN - On March 3rd to Karl and Joanne (née Sundby), a son William, a brother for Harry and George.

DEATHS

ABBOTT - Vera Doris (Nanny Latham). On 12th March 1997 aged 94 the beloved nanny of John, Susan and Richard Latham. Their children, Jasper, Ella and Rosy, David Bernard, Philip and Dinah, George, Harry, Louise and Emily and Susan's grandchildren Anyusha, Tishara, Ruby and Rona. For sixtyone years she was the support of all the family and finally the beloved companion of Lady Gwendoline Latham. Funeral at Holy Trinity Church, Sunningdale on Thursday 20th March at 10 o'clock followed by interment at St. Peter's Church, Linkenholt near Andover at 2.45pm. Enquiries to Lines Bannister, 69 High Street, Ascot, Berks.

AUSTIN - Alan Thomas died March 12th 1997 aged 78 years, adored husband of Queenie (née Hargreaves), precious Daddy of Patricia, Carolyn and Nicky and Dad to Tony. Much loved by his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Service at Lodge Hill Crematorium, Friday March 21st at 2.30pm. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to British Heart Foundation or Birmingham Childrens Hospital.

BRODIE - On 13th March 1997. Patrick Henry Brodie M.C. beloved husband of Barbara and dearly loved father of Robert, Jane and Andrew. Funeral at 11am on Thursday 20th March at Christ Church, Radlett followed by private cremation. Family flowers only to Nethercotts, 20 Aldenham Road, Radlett, Herts, by 9.30am.

BIRRELL - Very suddenly in a London hospital on Sunday March 9th 1997, James (Jamie) Birrell aged 26 years, treasured son of Betty and David of Crook of Devon. Dearly loved brother of Allison and Karen, brother-in-law of Peter and Gregg and uncle of Jack and Euan. Funeral Service in Cleish Church, Kinross on Monday March 17th at 2.00 p.m. and thereafter to Cleish Cemetery at which all friends are invited. " Jamie had a thousand friends - you only had to know him for ten minutes to be one".

CLOPET - Priscilla (née Bradley-Williams) widow of Carl died on Monday March 10th at her home after many years of remarkable fortitude. Cremation has taken place, but if desired please send any donations to The Macmillan Unit King Edward VII Hospital, Midhurst, West Sussex GU29 0BL.

DODD - On March 10th 1997 at Formia, Italy. Cecil James Dodd known as Richard / Dicky aged 73 years. Will be sadly missed by his wife Donata, sons Mark and Alexander, his sister Irene and their families.

GOODALE - George Gerald, on March 14th, 1997, peacefully at home. Much loved husband, father and grandfather. Funeral Service at St. Mary's Church, Battle on Thursday, March 20th at 3pm. Family flowers only. Donations to St. Michael's Hospice, c/o Jempson & Son, 38 High Street, Battle. TN33 0EE.

GRATWICK - John Gratwick O.B.E., died peacefully in his sleep at home on March 12th after a short illness bourne with dignity and courage. Sadly missed by all his family. Funeral Service at St. Mary Thorpe Church, Thorpe, Surrey, Saturday 22nd March 11.30. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to The St. Mary Thorpe Tower and Organ Appeal c/o Father Michael Rothwell, The Vicarge, Thorpe, Surrey TW20 8TQ.

HALL - Harriett Emily 'Norah' (née Chambers) passed away peacefully at Batchfoot Nursing Home, Upwey, Dorset, on March 12th 1997 aged 95 years. Formerly of Beech Close, Broadmayne. Beloved widow of Captain L.W.J. Hall. Funeral Service at St Laurence Church, Upwey, on Thursday March 20th at 2pm, followed by cremation at Weymouth. Flowers and enquiries to Stocking Funeral Service, 22 Crescent Street, Weymouth, (01305) 785915.

IRVING - On March 11th 1997 Margaret (Maggie) in her 98th year. First woman tea-taster in Britain and a founder member of Greater London Soroptimist Club. A much loved aunt and great-aunt, she will be sadly missed by family and friends. Funeral Service at Worthing Crematorium on Friday March 21st at 12 noon. Family flowers only, but donations if desired to United Society for Propagation of the Gospel, for Work in Africa c/o H.D. Tribe, 130 Broadwater Road, Worthing, West Sussex.

JONES-PARRY - Mary on 10th March aged 86 years, peacefully at Oxford. Beloved widow of Sir Ernest, much loved and missed by Tristram, Rupert and his wife Diane, and granddaughter Emma. Funeral 20th March at Woodvale Crematorium, Lewes Road, Brighton at 12 noon. No flowers please. Donations if desired to the John Radcliffe Hospital c/o Hanningtons Funeral Directors, 4/6 Montefiore Road, Hove BN3 1RD.

Patrick Philip. Peacefully on March 11th 1997 Patrick aged 71 years, architect. Funeral Service at Shrewsbury Crematorium on Monday March 24th at 4pm. Sprays or cut flowers only, please. Enquiries tel: 01743 344646.

PEPPE - Alison (née Johnson) suddenly and peacefully at home on 12th March. Widow of Tosco and much loved mother and grandmother. Funeral at St. George's Church on Saturday March 22nd at 12.30. Flowers from close family only please. Donations if wished to St. George's Church or the Multiple Sclerosis Society, 25 Effie Road, London SW6 1EE.

SNEDDON - Robert Sneddon CMG MBE. Died on March 12th at St. Peter's Hospital, Chertsey. Loved by Kay and all his family. Funeral at St. John's Crematorium, Woking. No flowers, but donations if wished to "Airbridge Association". Tel: 01507 345024. All enquiries to Woking Funeral Service. Tel: 01483 772266.

ZABLOCKI - Tadeusz. Peacefully in his sleep on 13th March, at home. Beloved husband of Anna, father of Caroline and Ewa. Family funeral on Thursday, 20th March at 11.30am St. John the Evangelist, St. John's Avenue, Putney, followed by burial at Putney Vale Cemetery. Requiem Mass for all family and friends to be held on Friday, 21st March at Little Brompton Oratory at 11am.

MEMORIAL SERVICES

WETTON - Sheila. A Service to celebrate the life of Sheila Wetton will be held at Christ Church, Chelsea on Thursday 20th March at 2pm.

IN MEMORIAM — PRIVATE

CRACKNELL - In ever loving memory of Freda, dearly beloved first wife of Desmond and mother of Valerie, Vivienne, Roger and Victor, who passed away on March 16th 1980. Our brave, brave "wee one" now safe in the arms of God.

VINCENT - To the memory of Ruth Vincent (née Ainslie) born 16th March 1897. Artist, photographer, needlewoman, gardener, super cook, devout Christian, adored wife and mother.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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GIFTS

A BIRTHDATE Newspaper 1847-1996 in presentation folder £18.00 inc p&p. Newsreel year videos avail. Tel/Fax 01934-412844 9pm 7 days.

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GEARY, Charlotte, 28 Mayfield Road, Pinhoe, Exeter, Devon, died 22nd May 1996; particulars to Piper Smith & Basham, solicitors, (ref: G 162.2 MS.SM), 31 Warwick Square, London SW1V 2AF before 19th May 1997.

TRUSTEE ACTS

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GOODENOUGH, NANCY WATERFIELD of Fairlands, Northfield Avenue, Shiplake, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. Died on 4th February, 1997 Particulars to SARJEANT & SHEPPARD Solicitor(s) of 150 Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1HE before 6th June, 1997

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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OBITUARIES

RONALD FRASER

Ronald Fraser, actor, died after an internal haemorrhage on March 13 aged 66. He was born on April 11, 1930.

Ronald Fraser's face was his fortune. It was not a handsome face — "mad, mad" was how he once described it — but it was mobile and wonderfully expressive, changing in an instant from scowling belligerence to smirking mirth, from baffled rage to dignified vulnerability. It helped to turn a shrewd and sensitive actor into one of Britain's most popular and respected comic entertainers.

Happy to see himself as "a crumbling old thing resembling a porcupine", Fraser rarely minded being asked how "an ugly so-and-so" like him came to be an actor. Nor was he particularly offended if people thought "Cor, I could play that part myself if that ugly devil can do it". What he *did* mind was being told, as he had been as a student at RADA, that "you'll be all right as a character actor with your face. You'll make a fair sort of living." *He didn't want that.* He wanted, he said, to be a star.

He proved, however, in the course of his colourful career, that it was possible to be both a character actor *and* an unlikely sort of star. "Every part is a character part," he would insist, and he proved his point in everything he did, from walk-on cameos to title roles. Slightly bogus upper-class bluster was Fraser's forte, but there was humanity, honesty and intelligence behind the fruity accent and Blimpish tics.

Fraser's finest comic achievement — his perfect vehicle — was the 1970s television series *The Misfit*, where he played the bewildered Basil "Badger" Allenby-Johnson, an upright colonial rubber planter cast adrift in a Britain he no longer understands, a gentlemanly Edwardian relic hopelessly at odds with the new strike-bound, permissive society.

Fraser saw Badger as a complex character, not some Alf Garnett with proper vowels. He was "campaigning against cheapness, nastiness and thoughtlessness"; he was "*not* a fuddy duddy" but "totally honest, a real person, a chap of spirit and integrity whose views are not based on prejudice about race or anything else". Viewers loved him, whatever they thought of his opinions. The series ran for only 13 episodes, but it caught perfectly the confusions and anxieties of a transitional era. Badger remains a memorable and finely nuanced creation.

But Fraser's range was wider than was often realised. Although he disliked — and claimed to be no good at — what he called "silly comic accent character parts", he played a lot of them over the years. He played villains as well as charmers. He also, in films such as *The Long and the Short and the Tall* and *The Flight of the Phoenix*, showed that he could portray tough working-class squaddies as vividly as he portrayed pompous representatives of the officer class.

He was an outstandingly funny Falstaff. Recently, he had delighted a new and improbably rowdy young audience with his shabby, offbeat charm, appearing regularly on Chris Evans's outrageous *TFI Friday* television show as the "Lord of Love", dressed in a smoking jacket and reading love poems.

Ronald Fraser was the son of a Scottish builder and decorator. It was only after three years' postwar service with the Seaforth Highlanders in North Africa that he discovered a talent for entertainment, when he stood in for a friend as a disc jockey on the local Forces' radio station. "After two or three records," he said, "I thought what a lovely way to earn money." He also found himself acting in Terence Rattigan's *French without Tears*, in Benghazi, an experience he described as "rather elating".

Leaving the Army, he auditioned for RADA in 1952 and won a scholarship. He was a talented but far from diligent student, and left after 18 months. By then, however, he had come to the attention of his future agent Peter Crouch, whom he was later to describe as "the biggest influence in my life".

His first professional role was not a starring one, however. He was taken on as dresser to the formidable Sir Donald Wolfit, perhaps the last, larger-than-life representative of the dying breed of great actor-managers. A few small roles came with the job, and in 1953 Fraser understudied Noël Coward in *The Apple Cart* at the Haymarket. Years of solid theatre work followed, at the Old Vic and in repertory in Glasgow and the Midlands, doing everything from Shakespeare to the most undemanding comedy.

The 1960s and 1970s were a lively time for Fraser. Film and television work grew out of his stage success. It brought him into contact with the likes of Richard Burton, Robert Harris, Michael Caine, Sean Connery and Peter O'Toole, and in their high-profile, high-living company he pursued his twin enthusiasms: women ("girls," he said, "have always been my disaster area", though a screen love scene with Raquel Welch left him unmoved) and what he called "cocktails" (his favourite, "Fraser Water," comprised a touch of ice, a kiss of lime, a splash of tonic and most of a bottle of vodka). He was an unabashed romantic, an insecure but naturally convivial man.

For much of his career Fraser's private passions seemed to attract at least as much public interest as his acting — he was always ready to discuss his private life in interviews — and his reputation for slightly frivolous celebrity may have diverted attention away from his considerable talent. For an actor of such obvious and distinctive ability, he was for long periods in his life quite shamefully underused.

The roles, in fact, remained fairly regular throughout most of Fraser's career — his television credits included *Pennies from Heaven*, *Brideshead Revisited*, *Fortunes of War*, *Minder*, *Lovejoy* and *Taggart*; among the films he appeared in were *The Killing of Sister George*, *The Wild Geese*, *Absolute Beginners* and *Scandal* — but few of them did him justice, though he did more than justice to them. An impressive exception came in 1990, when he gave a moving and funny performance as an elderly inhabitant of a nursing home, in a television play called *Obituaries*.

In 1956 Fraser married the actress Elizabeth Howe, whom he had met at RADA. The marriage ended in divorce in 1964. Fraser is survived by their two daughters.

EVELYN KARK

Evelyn Kark, head of the Lucie Clayton schools, died of Cushing's disease, on March 8 aged 68. She was born on December 5, 1928.

UNDER the pseudonym of Lucie Clayton, Evelyn Kark was a leading figure in the emergence during the 1960s of the new aristocracy of models. It was her Lucie Clayton Model and Charm School in London which taught such beauties as Shirley Anne Field, Jackie Collins, Jean Shrimpton and Celia Hammond to walk ramrod straight down the catwalk — "chin parallel with the floor, directly above the shoulders directly above the hips which are over the centre of the feet".

In 1965 the college was split into three sections, for grooming, fashion design and secretarial skills. The last, the Lucie Clayton Secretarial College in South Kensington, was to be the most successful, earning a reputation as Britain's most celebrated purveyor of typing, shorthand and deportment to a select clientele.

The girls, most of whom come straight from school, were taught secretarial skills as well as a perplexing array of social accomplishments — how to emerge elegantly from a low-slung sports car, how to hold a cigarette and a glass of champagne, how to sit down without looking at the chair and how to eat asparagus without dribbling butter down your chin. For middle-class parents, eager for their daughters to look like Jean Shrimpton and possess every social asset to match, it was immensely popular.

Kark's own career was living proof of how far a good secretary can travel. Born Evelyn Florence Gordine in the far from fashionable north London suburb of Queensbury, her schooling was disrupted by the war which broke out when she was 12. She was later to describe her education as having been carried out "privately and inconspicuously".

She worked for a spell as an assistant to the editor of *Courier Magazine* before going on in 1950 to join Muriel Spark, not yet a published writer, as a secretary on the launching of *Model*, an innovative directory of British mannequins. The project was the brainchild of Leslie Kark, a novelist and editor, and Evelyn — like so many good secretaries before and since — was to go on to marry her boss six years later.

The popular press at the time was eager for pictures of pretty girls and *Model* was an instant success. On the strength of it, Leslie Kark went on to acquire the Lucie Clayton Model and Charm School which had been founded in 1928 by Sylvia Golledge. Assuming the name of Lucie Clayton for the purposes of television appearances, Evelyn Kark became head of the school in 1952.

She herself was a finely chiselled, delicate beauty and, though too short for modelling, was possessed of a warmth of personality and sense of fun which ensured her popularity with her glamorous charges. By the time the Sixties came along she had turned the fortunes of the once ailing agency and established it as the smart place to be. In 1961 the Lucie Clayton School of Fashion Design and Dressmaking was founded.

The dashing success in the 1950s of Fiona Campbell Walter (Baroness von Thyssen) who came from a more elevated social sphere than most of her colleagues, and in the 1960s of Sandra Paul (now Mrs Michael Howard), had eased the way for modelling to be considered a more respectable profession. It was this which had heralded Kark's idea of a finishing school. In 1966 she launched the secretarial college, which became the biggest of Lucie Clayton's three branches.

Always innovative, Evelyn Kark instituted a number of other short courses, varying from a nursery training for nannies to evening classes in accent, teaching "BBC English". She also wrote two books, *The World of Modelling* (1968) and *Modelling and Beauty Care* (1985).

In latter years the college was adamant that it was not anachronistic. It kept pace with the times, updating electronic technology as well as its social skills. Girls "finished" at Lucie Clayton, it was insisted, were as likely to display their new accomplishments in the boardroom as at the Queen Charlotte's Ball. Many parents still regard it as the smart place for their daughters to be seen and it maintains its links with high society, launching the deb season each year with the Berkeley Dress Show.

Evelyn Kark retired in 1995 when the business was sold. She went to live in Burford where she took great pleasure in entertaining her friends. She was an excellent cook.

She is survived by her husband, whom she married in 1956, and by a son and daughter.

EDWIN THOMPSON

Edwin Thompson, brewer, died on February 18 aged 75. He was born on February 2, 1922.

TEDDY THOMPSON developed Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries from its roots as a Black Country institution supplying local pubs to its present position as the country's largest independent brewery. During the two main phases of rationalisation among British brewers — around the mid-1960s and, again, after the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report of 1989 — Thompson held out against two temptations: he resisted not only the blandishments of the huge conglomerate national brewing companies but also refused to be seduced by the fashion for diversification.

A quietly spoken man with strong convictions, he presented a forceful case for the independence of local brewery companies based on both service to local markets and their financial performance for shareholders. During his 48 years at Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries he was able to observe the four phases of postwar brewing: first, rapid consolidation after a period of underinvestment; secondly, the spreading of brewing companies' wings in the face of poor industrial relations in the 1970s; thirdly, the sharp decline in the amount of beer drunk, partly as a result of the fall in the numbers of those engaged in heavy industry during the 1980s, and the consequent closure of small breweries in many towns and cities; and, finally, the refocusing of the brewing industry on pub retailing and brand development in the 1990s.

Each phase brought new products — the introduction of keg beer and the reaction of hardened beer-drinkers which brought about the Campaign for Real Ale (Camra), the development of lager and the resulting opportunity to raise beer prices by offering a cool drink, and eventually the establishment of "fun pubs" with all that that implied in terms of public order.

Edwin John Thompson inherited the family business from his father. He was educated at Wellington College and, for a year before being called up, was a wartime undergraduate at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1941, he joined the RA's Light Regiment of Air Operations, fighting in North Africa and taking part in the landings both in Italy in 1943 and in Normandy in 1944. He stayed with the North-West Europe campaign through to the end of the war and was not finally demobilised until November 1946. Feeling at 24 that he was too old to resume his life as a student, he did not return to Oxford but instead joined the family firm, first becoming a director in 1947.

From those early days of postwar austerity he proceeded to build up the company — he became joint managing director in 1960 and chairman in 1971 — on the basis of doing business according to rules that concentrated on value for money, natural ingredients, high standards of pub operation and "fair measure". This last, introduced in the 1970s, saw the removal of traditional handpulls. In their place came metered beer dispensed into outsize glasses. This ensured that each pint was a full pint, with the froth on the top. This unremarkable fair dealing attracted widespread criticism within the industry, where brim measure remains the norm, and the froth has to be paid for by the customer.

Keg beer was fashionable in the 1960s because it enabled brewers to use cheaper ingredients to achieve consistency. The alternative — good raw materials, investment in cooling systems in pubs and proper training of pub licensees — was an expensive and long-term option which Thompson always preferred. In the long run this choice of his kept down beer prices in the Midlands: they are now the lowest in Britain.

In the 1970s the John Ellerman Company decided to invest heavily in brewing. Approaches to Wolverhampton & Dudley were vigorously repulsed. Ellerman then went on to buy Tollemache and Cobbold of Ipswich and also J. W. Cameron of Hartlepool. Cameron's was a medium-sized brewery with 750 pubs, much the same size as Wolverhampton & Dudley. It gave Thompson a wry sense of satisfaction when J. W. Cameron was acquired by his own company in 1992 for just £1 after it had passed through two subsequent ownerships after Ellerman.

Thompson was highly regarded within the industry. He was chairman of the Brewers' Society, the trade association of the brewing and pub-owning industry, in 1977-78. This was the year when the Labour Government, with Roy Hattersley as Secretary of State for Prices and Consumer Protection, attempted to introduce price controls in a period of rapid inflation both for raw material and labour costs. As leader of the negotiations with the department, Thompson was successful in ameliorating the most damaging aspects of the Government's proposals and thus in retaining opportunities for investment by the brewers.

Born in Wolverhampton, Thompson was committed to the wellbeing of the Black Country. He held directorships with a number of local companies including, before privatisation, one of the few surviving private utilities, the South Staffordshire Waterworks Company. He was also chairman of a number of charities and a founder of the Black Country Museum.

He leaves his widow, three daughters and one son.

LAVERN BAKER

LaVern Baker, rhythm and blues singer, died in New York on March 11 aged 67. She was born in Chicago on November 11, 1929.

"I LOVED LaVern Baker because she stood smack dab in the middle of the great tradition of Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith. There was no compromising LaVern." So said Jerry Wexler, a partner in the Atlantic record label, about one of his company's most valuable assets. The singer LaVern Baker, whose career encompassed rhythm and blues, rock 'n' roll and soul music, brought to even the most formulaic pop song a musical integrity that was never questioned.

Born Dolores Williams, she came from a musical background. Her aunt was Minnie Douglas McCoy, who found fame in the 1930s and 1940s as the guitar-playing blues singer Memphis Minnie. Like so many other black singers, Williams first sang in a gospel group at her local Baptist church. But it was not long before she found fame in the secular world as Little Miss Sharecropper at the Show Flame Bar in Detroit.

Soon she had a recording contract with National Records and then with Okeh, who billed her as Bea Baker. By the early 1950s she had joined the bandleader Todd Rhodes, who took her to King Records, and adopted the names LaVern Baker — in homage to the singer and dancer Josephine Baker, who, she claimed, was a relative.

But it was not until she joined the fledgeling Atlantic company that Baker's career took off. There, in 1954, she cut her first big hit *Tweedle Dee*. A catchy and rhythmic number, it broke free of the segregated rhythm and blues charts to make No 14 in the pop charts. However, a white singer, Georgia Gibbs, used the song, the same arrangement and even the same vocal style to do a note-for-note cover that climbed to No 2.

But *Tweedle Dee* marked a watershed. By the time Baker cut her next big hit, *Jim Dandy*, times had changed and American radio stations seemed less afraid to play the black originals of songs. Baker went on to have more than a dozen hits for Atlantic including the powerful ballad, *I Cried A Tear*, and the gospel-styled *Saved* from the songwriting team of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, which is one of the highspots of the current West End show celebrating their work, *Smokey Joe's Café*.

She later left Atlantic and moved to Brunswick Records where she cut some impressive and soulful duets with another veteran star, the singer Jackie Wilson. She moved to the Philippines in the 1970s where she managed a nightclub, but made occasional returns to America, including, in the 1980s, a surprise appearance at a birthday party for one of Nancy Reagan's friends, which saw her unlikely pairing with Mick Jones, the lead guitarist of the rock group Foreigner. She also contributed to the soundtracks of the films *Shag* and *Dick Tracy*, and returned to the United States for good to make her Broadway debut in *Black and Blue*, a musical tribute to Bessie Smith.

Baker had diabetes. By 1994 she had had both legs amputated below the knee.

She married several times, including once to the black comedian Slappy White, and had several natural and adopted children.

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRUSTEE ACTS

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KENNEDY, Margaret, 12 Marham Gardens, Wandsworth, London SW18 died 9th June 1996; particulars to Piper Smith & Basham, Solicitors, (ref: K 120.1.MLSM) 31 Warwick Square, London SW1V 2AF before 19th May 1997.

KENNEDY, Stephen, 12 Marham Gardens, Wandsworth, London SW18, died 5th May 1996; particulars to Piper Smith & Basham, Solicitors, (ref: K 120.1.MLSM) 31 Warwick Square, London SW1V 2AF before 19th May 1997.

MUNLANE, Julia, 46 Russell House, Cambridge Street, London SW1 died 4th November 1996; particulars to Piper Smith & Basham, Solicitors (ref: M311.1.MLSM) 31 Warwick Square London SW1V 2AF before 19th May 1997.

PARKER, NANCY of Murray House, 57B Murray Road, Northwood, Middlesex died on 21st December 1996 particulars to MATTHEW ARNOLD & BALDWIN Solicitors of PO BOX 103, 20 STATION ROAD, WATFORD, HERTS WD1 1HE before 16th May 1997 (Personal Representative: Richard John David Hussey, Alan John Piper and Jonas Hall).

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TAYLOR, DAVID ERIC of Kingscliffe Residential and Nursing Home, Park Road, Camberley, Surrey died on 13 January 1997 particulars to CLOSE COFF HUMPHREYS Solicitors of 90 PARK STREET, CAMBERLEY, SURREY GU15 3NY before 16 May 1997

SUDDENS, ARTHUR of Kingsleigh, Kingfield, Woking, Surrey died on 23 January 1997 particulars to GREGORY ROWCLIFFE & MILNERS Solicitors of 1 BEDFORD ROW, LONDON WC1R 4BZ (Ref: TWW) before 16 May 1997

UNDERWOOD, George Henry, 80 Peabody Estate, Tottenham, London N17; died 12th December 1996; particulars to Arrowsmith Lieff, Solicitors, 47 Kings Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4ES before 19th May 1997.

WEDGE, Susanna (otherwise Susan), 12a Sutherland Row, Pimlico, London SW1, died 15th January 1997; particulars to Piper Smith & Basham, Solicitors, (ref W168.2.MLSM) 31 Warwick Square, London SW1V 2AF before 19th May 1997.

LEGAL NOTICES

GAMING ACT 1968
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN
TAKE NOTICE that on the 12th March 1997 application was made to the Gaming Licensing Committee for the Enfield division for the grant of a licence under the Gaming Act 1968 in accordance with the following particulars:-
NAME OF APPLICANT: FIRST LEISURE TRADING LIMITED
NAME OF CLUB: RIVA BINGO & SOCIAL CLUB
LOCATION OF PREMISES: PREMISES BEING CONSTRUCTED AT UNIT 2, 492 GREAT CAMBRIDGE ROAD, ENFIELD, MIDDLESEX EN1 3SA
The application is for a Bingo Club Licence.
Any person who desires to object to the grant of the licence should send to the Clerk to the said Gaming Licensing Committee, Enfield Division, The Court House, Lordship Lane, Tottenham, London N17 6XH before 31st March 1997 two copies of a brief statement in writing of the grounds of his objection.
Dated this 15th day of March 1997
GOSSCHALKS, QUEENS GARDENS, HULL
SOLICITORS FOR AND ON BEHALF OF FIRST LEISURE TRADING LIMITED

No 010657 of 1997
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
COMPANIES COURT
IN THE MATTER OF JORDEC GROUP PLC
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition was, on the 26 February 1997 presented to Her Majesty's High Court of Justice for the confirmation of the reduction of the capital of the above named Company from £6,119,923 to £1,712,500 and of the Share Premium Account of the above named Company from £5,587,895 to £269,958.
AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Registrar of the Companies Court at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2A 2LL on 26 March 1997. Any creditor or shareholder of the Company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for the confirmation of the said reduction of Capital and of Share Premium Account shall appear at the time of hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose. A copy of the said Petition will be furnished to any such person requiring the same by the undermentioned solicitors on the payment of the regulated charge for the same.
DATED this 13th day of March 1997
Halliwell Landau, St James's Court, Brown Street, Manchester, M2 2JF
Tel: 0161 835 2003, Reference Number B7365.15.
Solicitors for the above-named Company

ON THIS DAY

March 15, 1961

There was no happy ending to Pilkington Jackson's efforts to ameliorate Service life. Vested interests squashed his attempts at Aldershot and Portsmouth. He resigned his commission and later went to America where he taught art: he died in 1907 aged 74.

THE FIRST SOLDIERS' HOME

YOUNG OFFICER WHO FOUGHT AGAINST THE EVILS OF GARRISON LIFE

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

The appalling state of the health of British troops in the garrison towns 100 years ago is almost impossible to realise today. It was due principally to the lack of intelligent interest in the soldiers' welfare shown by the Higher Command. For instance, in the Aldershot Command in 1860, with an average daily strength of 14,875, there were 14,949 admissions to hospital, of which 4,953 were due to "diseases of lust".

In the camp there were indeed 18 canteens "the most cheerful and comfortable of the huts", but men on pass did not want to stay in camp. To welcome them in the new village near by there were 25 public houses, several with large halls fitted out in great splendour in which varied entertainments were staged and gaily dressed prostitutes encouraged. There were also some 47 beer houses, most of which provided lodging for women.

At Gibraltar the previous year the conditions were proportionately as bad; but an Artillery subaltern, Pilkington Jackson, aged 26, was stationed there who was so moved by "the horrible scenes of nightly carnival in the streets" that he determined to take action.

At his own expense he hired a large building in the centre of the town, another at the southern end and a canteen in the camp, and fitted them out attractively. He provided bars for non-intoxicating refreshments and rooms for billiards, bagatelle, reading, writing, lecturing, a library, a museum and a gymnasium. He made few regulations (one of which forbade religious and military discussions), fixed a sixpenny enrolment fee, a penny weekly subscription and called these places the "Soldiers' Home", as distinct from Institute. He opened them in July 1859.

The account of the first year of the Homes by a naval captain and nine army officers felt "free to speak well of the Establishment in the formation of which they had taken no part". The Governor wrote to Jackson, now Captain, that "an incalculable amount of good resulted from the Homes". He also reported to the Home Secretary that "owing to the decrease in the sale of spirits he did not know what could be done to make up the revenue".

Sydney Herbert, that great War Minister, summoned Captain Jackson and expressed to him his "profound admiration" for the work he had done saying that "it required as much courage to write the truth sometimes as to command an army". However, before the inquiry could be completed, Lord Herbert died, on August 2 1861.

On September 3 Jackson submitted his Aldershot Report. He wrote that the village "is inhabited principally by publicans, brothel keepers, prostitutes, thieves and receivers of stolen property", and that "no system could be better imagined or more successfully carried out, if the object were to sap gradually the health of the soldier, to induce early debility, and hasten a premature death."

NEWS

Parents told to peel 'pesticide' fruit

■ Parents were warned last night by the Government to peel fruit before feeding their children with it after dangerous levels of an organophospate pesticide linked to Gulf War Syndrome were found in imported and home-grown apples.The worst contaminated apples contained up to six times the amount of the pesticide that can be consumed at one sitting without any risk to health, the Ministry of Agriculture said.....Page 1

'Be sure' is Major's slogan

■ John Major will launch the Conservative general election campaign today with an attempt to reclaim the centre ground from Tony Blair and a promise that the next Tory government will help the "have-nots become the haves".....Page 1

Billie-Jo arrest

The foster father of Billie-Jo Jenkins was remanded in custody after appearing in court charged with her murder.....Page 1

Albania crisis

American, Italian and German rescue helicopters came under fire in Albania and the US was considering despatching Marines for a beachhead rescue.. Pages 1, 18, 19

Train warning

The operators of South West Trains were told that they faced a £1 million fine.....Page 2

Clerical advice

A clergyman advocated shoplifting from supermarkets to retaliate for the damage they did to local communities.....Page 3

Fire damages

Rescue services run the risk of massive damages claims after the Court of Appeal ruled that firefighters are not immune from being sued for negligence.. Page 5

Rape law change

Men accused of rape may lose the right to question their alleged victims in court.....Page 6

Judge was misled

A judge was misled into granting an order for a pregnant woman to be held in hospital against her will.....Page 8

Top pop challenge

The world's longest-running television chart show, *Top of the Pops*, faces its gravest threat in 33 years.....Page 10

Afghanistan threat

Russia and three frontline Central Asian states are planning to raise two armed divisions for deployment on the borders of Afghanistan.....Page 16

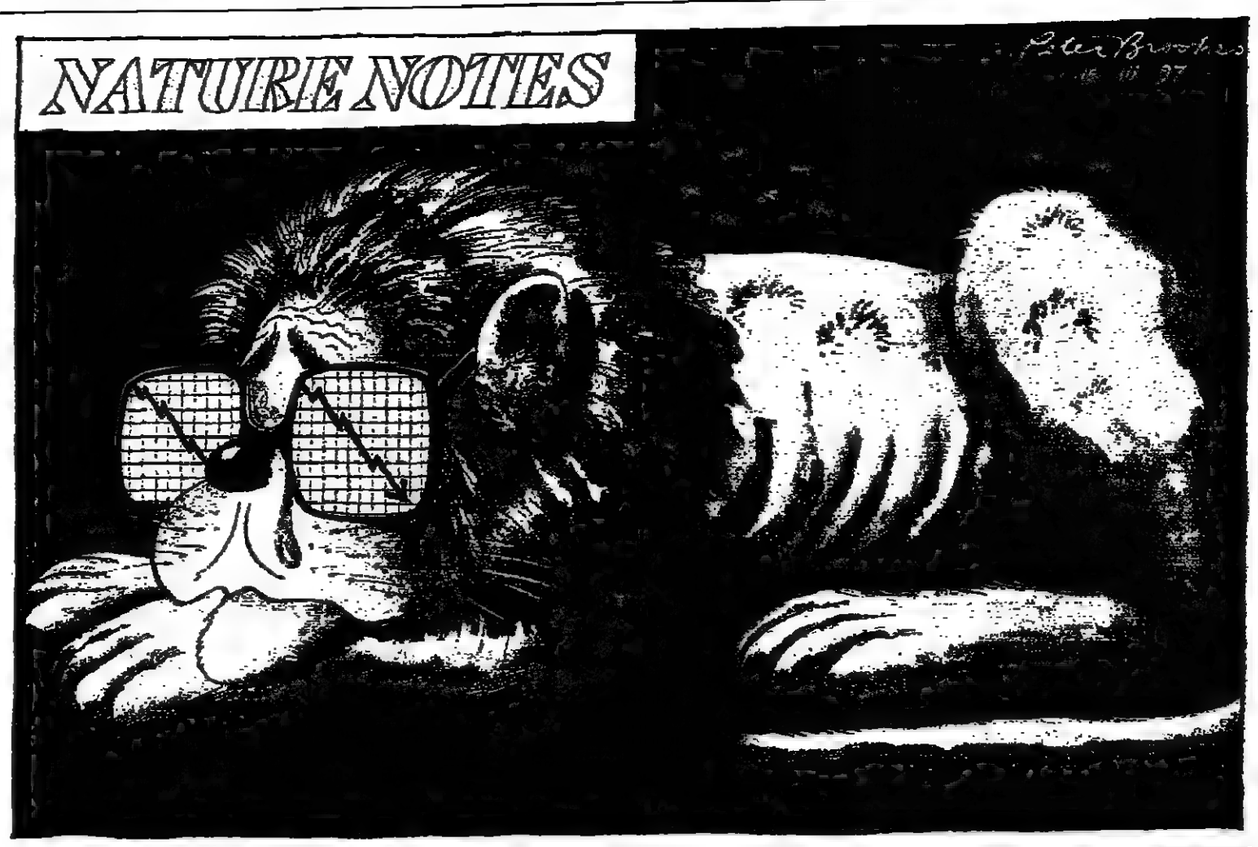
Russian warning

Aleksandr Lebed, Russia's presidential hopeful, said that growing discontent threatened to plunge the country into anarchy.....Page 17

Goalkeeper loses to the computer

■ A Premiership goalkeeper has fingered the problem which caused him to let in three sloppy goals: computer games. David James, the Liverpool goalkeeper, has accepted the blame, saying: "I was getting carried away playing *Tekkon II* and *Teamraider* for hours on end".....Page 1

NATURE NOTES



SECTIONS

MAGAZINE

Cantona: In search of an enigmatic star.....Page 10
Easty girls: German pop from the wall.....Page 18
Hogarth: Medical view.30

Weekend

Father figure: A daughter's love.....Pages 1, 2

Property: Auctions; stoves; Nash terrace.. Pages 4, 6
Country life: Rabbits and wild trout.....Pages 11, 13

10 15

Golden wonder: Dinner contact with C-3PO.Page 6
Win: In-line skates; details.....Page 3

Food fads on the high street.....Pages 4, 5
High life diary.....Page 3
TV & radio guide: The week ahead....Pages 23-57

OPINION

Perils of the saloon: The public mood has changed since Enoch Powell could engineer swings by dressing racism sentiments in a toga. The party of One Nation has better tunes to sing than terrace chants.....Page 25

To unite the Jews: If the Chief Rabbi cannot reconcile the traditions of Judaism then the outlook is bleak for Anglo-Jewry.....Page 25

OBITUARIES

Ronald Fraser, actor; **Evelyn Kark**, of the Lucie Clayton schools.....Page 27

COLUMNS

Simon Jenkins: The older I get, the more I feel a connoisseur of oldness. Venice on Monday was *al dente*, the air crisp, the sun on San Mark's cool and penetrating Page 24

Richard Attenborough: If you [Sir Peter Hall] don't believe things can change for the better, don't bother to vote. But I simply cannot accept that you are right to opt out.....Page 24

LETTERS

Graham Swift and William Faulkner; capture of Enigma machine.....Page 25

BUSINESS

Off the rails: More than £250 million has been wiped off the market value of Britain's leading rail operators as the mood turns against the new owners.....Page 29

Reprimand: BZW, one of the City's foremost institutions, has been formally criticised by the Panel on Takeovers over its actions in the £782 million hostile bid for Northern Electric.....Page 29

Markets: The FTSE 100 rose 26.6 to 4,424.3. The pound rose from 97 to 97.2, rising .39 cents to $1.6012 and .39 pfennigs to DM2.7212 .....Page 32

SPORT

Rugby union: France, meeting Scotland in Paris, are bidding for their fifth grand slam; England go for the triple crown against Wales in Cardiff.....Page 56

Football: Bradford City are adamant that Chris Waddle will stay with them this season.....Page 56

Cricket: Australia dismissed South Africa for 209 on the first day of the second Test in Port Elizabeth.....Page 55

CAR 97

Computer-controlled parking robots; Vauxhall's MPVs

ARTS

Richard Morrison: "Let's celebrate the mavericks who remain untouched by Mr Sanity and his prim sidekick, Ms Commonsense. They remind us that art is meant to be fun".....Page 23

Waste not: At the Old Vic the Peter Hall Company has inaugurated its season stylishly with a staging of Granville Barker's political play, *Waste*...Page 23

Ancient faces: Some of the world's oldest portraits have gone on show at the British Museum..Page 22

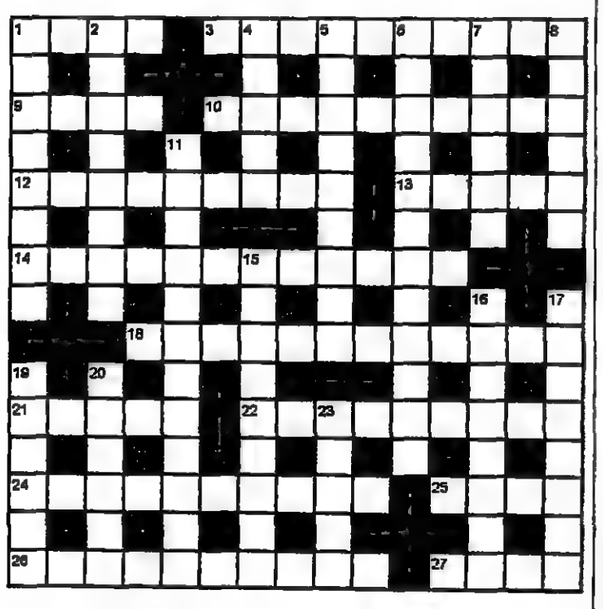
THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,428

A £20 book token will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The names of the winners and the solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address .....

.....

.....



ACROSS

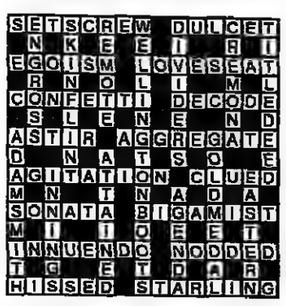
1 Females getting together drink, we hear (4).
3 For vital moment in court, produce counterargument? (5,5).
9 Bank of river, see (4).
10 Create a character that can deal with routine business (4,6).
12 Subject to friction, shifts or slips, perhaps (9).
13 Pan's empty, without fresh seafood (5).
14 Young criminal dealt with drug for crook (6,6).
18 Sounds like fool's a relative success in theatre (8,4).
21 Experience? Precisely (5).
22 Successfully cajole to buy a lot of drinks (3,6).
24 Theatrical performance without dialogue (3-3,4).
25 Intelligence within government department limited (4).
26 One of the pugnacious pair the French dropped into rivers (10).
27 Criticism a specially designed jacket can take, hopefully (4).

DOWN

1 They stop short of protecting calves in these islands (8).
2 Confirm it's a short girl I go out with (8).
4 Over earlier (5).
5 Scot turned up before game in university (9).
6 Demands made by fellows creating difficult for nobles? (4,8).
7 There's a place in the office for new post (2-4).
8 Right to have whip-round for the host (6).
11 Game location selectors of belligerent Americans announced (12).
15 Fearful about one substance kept under state control (9).
16 Plan mutual selection, taken up relatively late in life (8).
17 Work giving details of bay and chestnut trees, for example (4-4).
19 Decide to withdraw pot? (3,3).
20 Prince who's English needing top-class hereditary endowment (6).
23 Serious complaint over a type of steak (1-4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,422

Solution to Puzzle No 20,427



LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: *S E Crow, Glenrothes, Fife; B Seed, Southport, Lancashire; B P Wall, Danbury, Essex; A Parr, Cambridge; A Waters, Meopham, Kent.*

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HOURS OF DARKNESS

TODAY

Sun rises: 6.15 am — Sun sets: 6.05 pm
Moon sets: 12.51 pm — Moon rises: 10.09 am

First quarter tomorrow

London 6.05 pm to 6.13 am
Bristol 6.15 pm to 6.22 am
Edinburgh 6.16 pm to 6.26 am
Manchester 6.13 pm to 6.21 am
Penzance 6.27 pm to 6.34 am

TOMORROW

Sun rises: 6.13 am — Sun sets: 6.07 pm
Moon sets: 1.47 am — Moon rises: 10.52 am

First quarter today

London 6.07 pm to 6.10 am
Bristol 6.17 pm to 6.20 am
Edinburgh 6.18 pm to 6.23 am
Manchester 6.15 pm to 6.19 am
Penzance 6.29 pm to 6.32 am

HIGH TIDES

TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
London Bridge	06.00	6.9	18.26	6.6
Aberdeen	05.45	3.7	18.18	3.7
Avonmouth	11.24	11.3	23.37	10.9
Belfast	03.27	3.2	15.03	3.1
Cardiff	11.10	10.6	23.23	10.1
Devonport	10.03	4.8	22.20	4.7
Dover	03.03	6.2	15.33	5.9
Dublin (N Wall)	03.59	3.7	16.34	3.7
Falmouth	09.34	4.6	21.51	4.5
Greenock	04.28	3.3	16.56	3.2
Harwich	03.49	3.8	16.16	3.5
Holyhead	02.30	4.9	15.02	4.8
Hull (Albert Dj)	10.35	7.8	23.04	7.7
Ilfracombe	10.17	7.9	23.34	7.6
King's Lynn	10.37	5.6	23.06	5.5
Leith	07.06	4.9	19.38	4.9
Liverpool	03.15	8.4	15.44	8.2
Lowestoft	01.35	2.4	14.08	2.2
Margate	04.03	4.5	16.32	4.2
Milford Haven	10.36	5.9	22.57	5.7
Newquay	09.34	6.0	21.55	5.7
Oban	10.00	3.1	21.55	3.0
Penzance	05.54	4.8	21.20	4.6
Portland	10.57	1.5	23.12	1.5
Portsmouth	10.31	4.3	16.03	4.1
Shoreham	03.04	5.7	15.34	5.4
Southampton	02.53	4.1	15.15	3.9
Swansea	10.41	8.1	23.04	7.8
Tees	08.09	4.7	20.36	4.7
Walton-on-N	03.45	4.0	16.11	3.7

All times GMT Heights in metres

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Salcombe, and Torquay, Devon, 16C (61F); lowest day max: Lerwick, Shetland 5C (41F); highest rainfall: Cape Wrath, Highland, 0.55in; highest sunshine: Salcombe, 9.2hr

FORECAST

☐ **General:** Western parts of England and Wales will be rather overcast, with some drizzle and hill fog, while the east will be relatively bright, with a few places seeing some sunshine at times. Winds will be moderate westerly, keeping it mild, even warm where the sun comes out in the east.

Most of Scotland and Northern Ireland mild and quite cloudy. While early rain or drizzle dies out over eastern Scotland, it will become more persistent elsewhere during the afternoon. The far north will be rather cold with some wintry showers.

☐ **London, SE, Cent S England, E Anglia, Midlands:** Mainly dry and bright with sunny intervals. Wind west or northwest light. Max 14C (57F).

☐ **E, NW, Central N, NE England, Lakes, IoM, Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee:** Mostly cloudy, with some rain or drizzle, especially later. Wind mainly west, locally north, light. Max 11C to 13C (52F to 55F).

☐ **Channel Isles, SW England, Wales:** Overcast, drizzly on coasts, with some fog. Brighter inland. Wind mainly west light. Max 12C (54F).

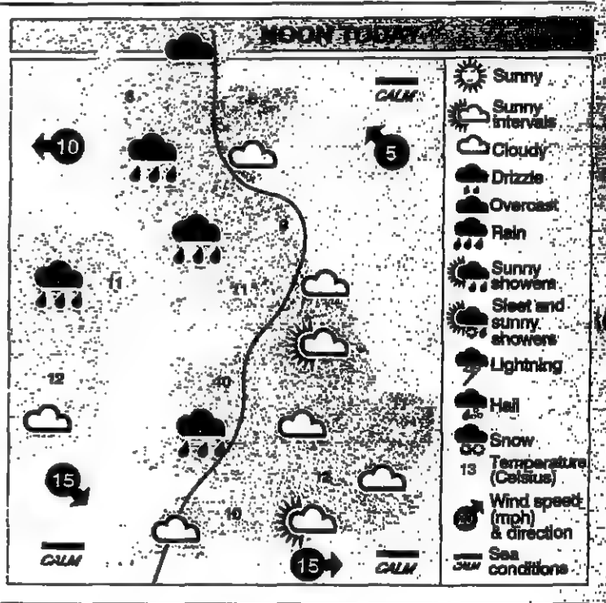
☐ **Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Orkney:** Rain or sleet turning more showery later. Wind northeast or east light or moderate. Max 5C to 7C (41F to 45F).

☐ **SW, NW Scotland, Glasgow, Cent Highlands, Argyll, N Ireland:** Mostly cloudy. Rain or drizzle at times, heavier later. Wind rather variable but light. Max 9C to 11C (48F to 52F).

☐ **Shetland:** Clear or sunny spells. Isolated wintry showers. Wind north moderate or fresh. Max 4C (39F).

☐ **Outlook:** Rain confined to north later. Sunshine more likely in south.

MOON TODAY



AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

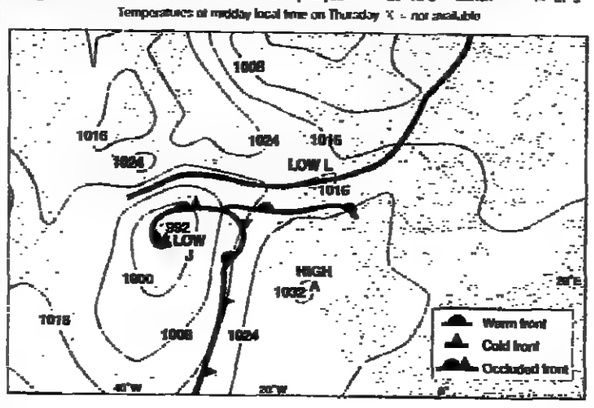
24 hrs to 5 pm: b=bright; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=dull; f=fair; fg=fog; g=gale; h=hail; r=rain; sh=shower; sl=sleet; sn=snow; s=sun; t=thunder

	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	Max F			Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	Max F	
Aberdeen	X					Leuchars	X				
Anglesey	5.1	0.02	13	55	s	Littlehmptn	2.4	0.01	16	59	s
Aspatria	1.0	0.22	11	52	sh	London	1.3	0.01	14	57	c
Arlesmere	4.5	0.01	14	57	b	Lowestoft	3.7	0.04	14	57	sh
Belfast	0.8	0.01	12	54	b	Manchester	1.4	0.13	12	54	r
Birmingham	3.0	0.02	14	57	sh	Margate	3.6	0.04	14	57	r
Bognor R	2.6	-	15	59	b	Morehead	8.0	0.01	13	55	s
Bournem'th	6.2	0.01	15	59	s	Morecambe	1.4	0.13	10	50	c
Bristol	5.3	0.02	14	57	s	Newcastle	5.6	0.02	13	55	s
Buxton	0.1	0.21	9	48	r	Newquay	3.6	0.01	12	54	d
Cardiff	5.9	0.01	12	54	fg	Norwich	3.5	0.01	15	59	b
Clacton	4.2	-	14	57	s	Oxford	4.5	0.01	14	57	r
Cleethorpes	X					Penzance	X	0.02	13	55	d
Colwyn Bay	1.6	0.10	12	54	c	Poole	5.3	0.02	15	59	s
Cromer	4.6	0.02	13	55	s	Prestatyn	X	0.13	14	57	b
Dunbar	X					Ross-o-wye	2.7	0.01	14	57	b
Eastbourne	2.5	-	13	55	c	Ryde	X				
Edinburgh	5.8	0.09	14	57	b	Salcombe	9.2	0.01	16	61	s
Eskdalemuir	1.2	0.05	11	52	sh	Sandown	4.7	-	14	57	s
Exmouth	8.0	-	15	59	s	Saunr Shd	2.9	-	12	54	s
Falmouth	2.3	0.02	13	55	d	Scarboro'	4.4	0.01	12	54	b
Fishguard	7.6	0.05	12	54	s	Shanklin	X				
Folkestone	2.7	0.02	15	59	r	Shrewsbury	0.8	0.04	13	55	sh
Glasgow	2.3	0.15	13	55	sh	Skegness	4.5	-	15	59	b
Guernsey	7.0	0.01	14	57	s	Southend	X				
Hastings	2.3	-	15	59	b	Southport	6.3	0.20	10	50	s
Hayling I.	3.0	-	15	59	b	Southsea	3.7	-	15	59	s
Herne Bay	1.7	-	14	57	b	Stornoway	0.5	0.08	12	54	d
Hove	2.3	X	12	54	c	Swanage	4.5	0.01	14	57	sh
Hunstanton	X	0.01	12	54	c	Teignmouth	8.8	-	15	59	s
Ilfracombe	X					Tenby	8.9	0.03	13	55	s
Isle of Man	3.4	0.04	12	54	c	Tiree	X				
Jersey	5.4	0.01	13	55	b	Torquay	8.3	0.01	16	61	s
Kinloss	2.9	0.01	14	57	b	Tynemouth	-	0.01	14	57	s
Leeds	X					Ventnor	8.0	-	14	57	s
Lerwick	3.1	0.06	3	37	s	Weymouth	6.7	-	13	55	b

ABROAD

Ajaccio	16	61	s	Corfu	17	63	s	Majorca	18	64	s
Akrotiri	19	66	s	D'phaga	8	46	c	Malaga	18	64	s
Alex'dria	17	63	c	Dublin	13	55	t	Malta	16	61	t
Algiers	17	63	s	Dubrovnik	X			Melb'rne	17	63	f
Amst'dm	12	54	s	Faro	19	66	s	Mexico C	X		
Athens	16	61	s	Florence	14	57	s	Miami	28	82	s
B Aires	25	77	s	Frankfurt	13	55	c	Milan	19	66	s
Bahrain	19	66	c	Funchal	20	68	s	Montreal	-10	14	fg
Bangkok	31	88	f	Geneva	15	59	s	Moscow	8	46	s
Barbados	X			Gibraltar	18	64	f	Munich	13	55	f
Barcelona	18	64	s	Helsinki	4	39	c	N Delhi	22	72	f
Beirut	19	66	f	Hong K	25	77	c	N York	1	34	s
Belgrade	16	61	s	Innsbruck	14	57	f	Nairobi	30	86	f
Berlin	7	45	d	Istanbul	10	50	s	Naples	X		
Bermuda	17	63	f	Jeddah	27	81	s	Nice	15	59	s
Biarritz	14	57	s	Jo'burg	17	63	r	Oslo	12	54	f
Borde'x	11	52	s	L Angeles	X			Paris	13	55	s
Brussels	12	54	c	L Palmas	25	77	s	Peking	9	48	r
Budapest	15	59	f	Le Touquet	9	48	f	Perth	23	73	s
Cairo	21	70	f	Lisbon	21	70	s	Prague	10	50	c
Cape Tn	27	81	s	Locarno	15	59	s	Reykjavik	-6	21	s
Ch'church	16	61	X	Luxembg	12	54	c	Rhodes	16	61	f
Chicago	4	39	f	Luxor	27	81	s	Rio de J	35	95	f
Cologne	13	55	c	Madrid	18	64	s	Riyadh	23	73	s
								Rome	17	63	s
								S Fr'sco	14	57	f
								S Paulo	29	84	f
								Salzburg	13	55	f
								Santiago	25	77	s
								Seoul	20	68	s
								Sing'por	31	88	c
								St'kholm	8	46	f
								Strasb'rg	14	57	s
								Sydney	21	70	f
								Tangier	19	66	s
								Tel Aviv	21	70	s
								Tenerife	29	84	s
								Tokyo	13	55	f
								Toronto	X		
								Tunis	18	64	f
								Valencia	21	70	s
								Vanc'ver	7	45	f
								Venice	X		
								Vienna	16	59	s
								Warsaw	11	52	s
								Wash'ton	9	48	f
								Wel'ngton	16	61	X
								Zurich	14	57	s

Temperatures at midday local time on Thursday X - not available



Changes to the chart above from noon: low L will run quickly southeast with little change. High A will remain stationary with little change. Low J will drift slowly north while filling

THE TIMES 2

INSIDE SECTION 2 TODAY

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday

WORKING WEEK
On the milk run to a 'hip' new holiday island
PAGE 31

BUSINESS
Graham Searjeant on schemes to give you back money
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SPORT
Healey seeks to make place his own
PAGES 50-56

THE HIDDEN ASSETS OF SMITHKLINE BEECHAM
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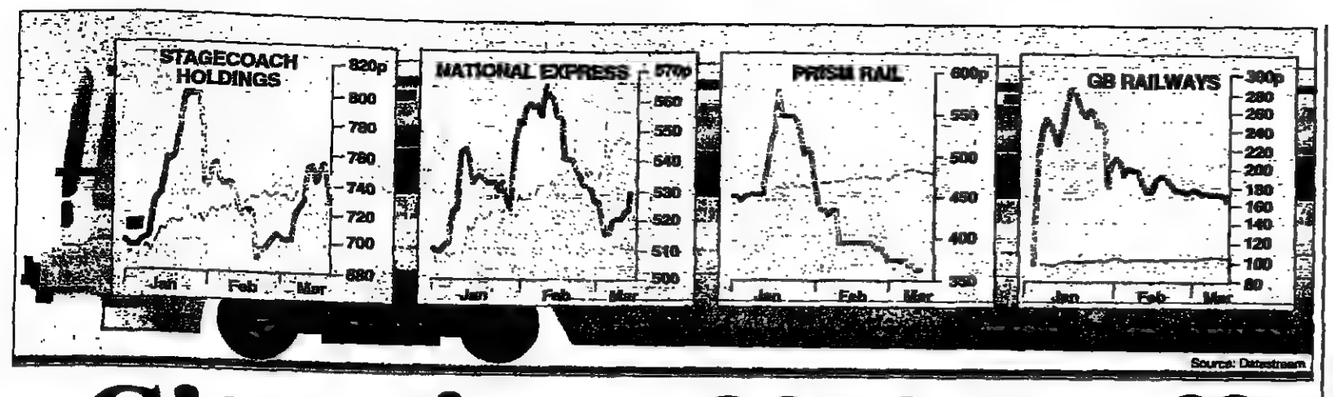
SATURDAY MARCH 15 1997



City wipes £250m off rail operators' shares

By Fraser Nelson

MORE than £250 million has been wiped off the stock market value of Britain's leading rail operators as the mood in the City turned against the new owners of the country's railways.

Stagecoach, Prism Rail, GB Railways and National Express — who between them control 13 of the country's 25 privatised rail networks — have lost an average of 23 per cent of their market since the end of January. Three of the four suffered further losses in value yesterday, led by a 3 per cent drop in the value of Stagecoach.

The company, led by Brian Souter, chief executive, and Anne Gloag, his sister, has been told that it is in danger of losing the South West Trains franchise if it fails to reign in the spate of cancellations.

Its shares fell by 24p to 732½p yesterday as John O'Brien, franchising director, threatened to fine the company £1 million if it fails to rein in the troubles at its South West Trains franchise by the end of next month.

Analysts said the threat marked the end of the City's love affair with railway stocks, as the complexities of running the rail networks became apparent. One said: "Stagecoach is going into uncharted territory, and the fines which it emerge with will speak volumes about the risks which every other company is facing when things go wrong. At the moment, we know nothing about the downside, and everyone is learning from Stagecoach's mistakes.

"We are also seeing the different appraoches companies are taking. Stagecoach is an aggressive cost-cutting animal, and it's far more likely to run into trouble with the regulator than Virgin, which concentrates on getting more bums on seats and lifting revenue growth."

However, few analysts believe that Stagecoach will face a £1 million penalty as the company can put much of the blame on engineering works. The £1.2 million hit that Stagecoach inflicted on itself by giving away free tickets is not expected to be surpassed by an external penalty from the franchising director.

Another analyst attributed the slump in the sector to the end of the privatisation process. "When there was still the likes of Thameslink to be had, the shares of all the bidders were inflated. But now that every franchise has been handed out, this hope premium has completely disappeared from the market."

The fiasco at Stagecoach has sobered up a sector which had spiralled into "ridiculous pandemonium" as the privatisation process drew to a close, he added. The main casualties of this have been Prism Rail, and GB Railways, whose shares trade on the AIM. Prism, whose four franchises include the London-Tilbury-Southend "misery line" and Cardiff Railways, joined the market at 100p before it won any franchise.

Its shares shot to 580p when the Thameslink franchise was up for grabs, but have since slumped to 360p after falling 5p yesterday. GB Railways, which runs the Anglia franchise, trebled its market value on its debut on AIM but has seen its shares fall from 287p to 165p after it became clear that it would not win any other part of the franchise.

Almost all of the British train operators have declared an interest in taking a piece of the railway system in continental Europe when it becomes privatised. They claim that, after bedding down their own franchises, British transport groups will be in pole position to win a significant share of the contiental transport market.


Ann Gloag and Brian Souter could be in danger of losing the South West franchise

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Takeover Panel censures BZW

By Martin Waller

BARCLAYS de Zoete Wedd, one of the City's foremost institutions, has been formally criticised by the Panel on Takeovers and Mergers over its actions in the dying days of the £782 million hostile bid for Northern Electric in December last year.

Advisers to Northern, which was taken over by CE Electric, the American utility, after an extraordinary four-day extension of the bid timetable by the Panel, claimed last night that the actions of BZW, the company's broker, had delivered Northern Electric into the hands of the Americans.

The Panel delivered judgment yesterday on an investigation into BZW's actions in the last days of the bid. The main issue was a £250,000 performance fee payable to the broker by Northern that was not disclosed to the Panel before BZW bought 1.6 per cent of Northern's shares on the stock market.

This purchase was designed to frustrate the bid from CE. BZW was criticised by the Panel for its failure to disclose the existence of the fee.

The extension of the bid timetable, granted once the existence of the performance fee was known, allowed CE to succeed in the takeover by the slenderest of margins, gaining acceptances from 50.3 per cent of the share capital.

One of the Northern team of advisers during the bid commented: "If they had told the Panel about the fee, Northern would still be independent."

But a BZW spokesman said: "There's nothing in the Panel's findings that says we didn't play by the rules. There was no deliberate concealment of the fee. There is no suggestion that the fee was an inducement to purchase Northern shares in breach of the Code."

WEEKEND MONEY
PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

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BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	4424.3	(+26.6)
Yield	3.64%	
FTSE All share	2154.51	(+7.71)
Nikkei	17923.84	(+23.16)
New York:		
Dow Jones	6931.62	(+52.72)*
S&P Composite	794.70	(+5.14)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	5¼%*	(5¼%)
Long Bond	95[illegible]*	(96[illegible])
Yield	6.95%*	(6.96%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	6[illegible]%	(6[illegible]%)
Liffe long gilt future (Jun)	111[illegible]	(111[illegible])

STERLING

New York:		
$	1.6028*	(1.5980)
London:		
$	1.6009	(1.5966)
DM	2.7203	(2.7174)
FFr	9.1785	(9.1582)
SFr	2.3397	(2.3311)
Yen	197.52	(196.14)
£ Index	97.2	(97.0)

DOLLAR

London:		
DM	1.6942*	(1.7055)
FFr	5.7185*	(5.7520)
SFr	1.4565*	(1.4655)
Yen	123.45*	(123.43)
$ Index	104.3	(104.2)

Tokyo close Yen 123.63

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Jun)	$19.55	(n/a)

GOLD

London close	$352.85	($352.95)

* denotes midday trading price

Liffe traded options

Because of technical problems that affected the transmission of prices information, the table of Liffe traded options published yesterday was rerun from Thursday's edition.

Schroders calls in Imro over delays

By Gavin Lumsden

SCHRODERS Investment Managers has called in Imro, its City regulator, after 12,500 investors in three of its unit trusts suffered delayed dividend payments.

The delay is an embarrassment for Schroders, occurring at the height of the Pep selling season and in a week in which it has revealed a £50 million increase in bonuses to its own employees.

Schroders said that it had "teething problems" with WM Company, the consultancy to whom it outsourced trust reporting last year. It said WM had been late presenting its figures, which had held up the distribution of income from its two largest unit trusts, UK Enterprise and UK Equity, both of which manage more than £1 billion of investors' money.

As a result, the dividend date on both funds was pushed back four days to February 19 and February 24 respectively. This had a knock-on effect on a third fund, Schroder Global Bond. Investors in the £170 million fund, who expected dividends on February 28, will now have to wait until March 21 for payment via the banks automated clearing system and March 24 for cheques in the post.

Schroders said the delays had affected less than a seventh of the 88,700 unit holders in the funds.

The company said the problems had been solved and dividends on its other funds would be paid on time. However, it will only pay compensation for loss of interest to investors with large holdings in the funds.

The company reported the problems to the Investment Managers Regulatory Organisation this week.

Wickes directors to stand down

By Sarah Cunningham

WICKES, the DIY retailer, is to make a further break with its troubled past with the resignation of two directors associated with Henry Sweetbaum, its former chairman and chief executive.

Robert Burrow and Sanford Sigoloff will resign as non-executive directors at the next annual meeting, the company said yesterday. Only Michael von Brentano, who took over as non-executive chairman when Mr Sweetbaum quit, will remain from the original board.

Mr Burrow and Mr Von Brentano waived their rights to a pension last year. According to Bill Grimsey, chief executive, Mr Sigoloff and Sanford Kaplan, who retired from the board in December, have agreed to a accept less than their full pension entitlement. Peter Humphries and Lord Sieff, the former Marks & Spencer chairman, two former non-executives, are still receiving £12,000 a year from the company.

The company yesterday disclosed a pre-tax loss of £55.7 million for 1996, compared with a loss of £279 million in 1995. The 1996 figure is in line with the forecast made at the time of the company's £53.7 million rights issue. As expected, the company will not pay a dividend. Nor will there be an interim dividend this year.

Last year, like-for-like sales growth was up 3.8 per cent while in the first two months of this year sales were up 13 per cent. Wickes shares rose 1½p to 153p.

Serious accounting irregularities were uncovered at Wickes last June and it later became clear that profits had been overstated. The Serious Fraud Office is continuing an investigation.

Tempus, page 32

Heinz unveils $500m shake-up

From Richard Thomson in New York

H J HEINZ, the ketchup and baked beans food giant, has announced the biggest reorganisation in its history, including 3,000 job losses and a $500 million restructuring charge.

The aim of "Project Millenium", as the plan is known, is to cut costs and refocus the company's business on fast-growing Asian and South American markets, with less emphasis on mature European markets.

Heinz will close several factories in Europe and North America and sell businesses which contribute about $600 million to its $9.1 billion annual sales. Its 43,000 workforce will be cut by about 6 per cent.


O'Reilly: refocusing

In Britain, Heinz has factories in Wigan, Lancashire, and in Harlesden, northwest London.

Tony O'Reilly, the flamboyant chairman, has set ambitious new growth targets for the company because its performance has flagged in recent years after a spectacular rise in the 1980s.

An annual earnings growth target of 10 to 12 per cent, compares with an industry average of 1 per cent.

Other food companies that have reorganised and cut costs in response to increasing competition include Nabisco, Campbell Soup, Kellogg and ConAgra.

Despite the appointment of William Johnson as president and chief operating officer, making him Dr O'Reilly's heir apparent, Dr O'Reilly is likely to stay for two or three more years to oversee the restructuring.

Mr Johnson was substantially responsible for Heinz's sharp improvement in profits last year by turning round the StarKist tuna and pet foods divisions. For much of the 1990s, Heinz's growth had slowed dramatically, it cut its advertising and launched few new products.

However, growing competiton in traditional markets in the US and Europe is forcing the company to concentrate on newer markets. It plans to boost its share of earnings outside the US from about 40 per cent to more than 50 per cent in five years.

United News & Media upbeat after 12% advance

By Paul Durman

UNITED News & Media, the company that takes in Express Newspapers and the Meridian and Anglia television franchises, was in upbeat mood yesterday as it reported a 12 per cent rise in underlying annual profits to £290.2 million.

Lord Hollick, chief executive, was enthusiastic about prospects for Channel 5, the new channel due to go on air at the end of this month. He said Channel 5, in which United has a stake of nearly 30 per cent, has spent aggressively on programming — including the rights to the World Cup qualifying game between England and Poland. Lord Hollick said: "Channel 5 is going to deliver a good share of the market, after the inevitable turbulence of the start. I suspect this is going to perform even better than I had hoped, and I had high expectations of it."

United's £63 million share of Channel 5's start-up costs was one of a host of exceptional items that obscured the 1996 results. The £3 billion merger that created the group last year cost £31 million in fees, and United has spent a further £94 million on restructuring. It set aside £18 million for the cost of integrating Blenheim, the exhibition business bought for £590 million in October. Disposals, including Tolley Publishing and Wagon Finance, led to exceptional profits of £150 million.

Unadjusted pre-tax profits showed a rise from £215.3 million to £233.8 million.

Lord Hollick said the group had enjoyed "outstanding performances" from its broadcasting and business services divisions. Broadcasting increased operating profits 36 per cent to £59.7 million, helped by higher advertising and production revenues. Business services, which includes the Miller Freeman trade magazines and exhibitions business that has been strengthened by the addition of Blenheim, lifted profits 38 per cent to £100.5 million.

The consumer publishing division, including newspapers, was held back by a £31 million rise in paper costs, but still increased profits by 7.5 per cent to £81 million. Lord Hollick said the editorial and other changes made at the Express "are beginning to turn this around". Analysts reckon the Express still made less than £10 million.

Halving the price of *Exchange & Mart* has produced a 40 per cent rise in circulation and produced "the virtuous circle where we have more readers, more advertisers, and more leads to advertisers".

Harlow Butler and United's other financial services businesses suffered a 5 per cent fall in profits to £51.1 million. Lord Hollick said this was very creditable in difficult markets.

A final dividend of 15.5p will increase the total to 23.5p a share, a 2 per cent rise.

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Sakamaki resigns as Nomura president

From Robert Whymant in Tokyo

NOMURA Securities, Japan's top broker, has acted to restore its shattered reputation by replacing its president and pledging to clean up corrupt practices. Hideo Sakamaki announced that he was stepping down as president to shoulder the blame for a scandal over illicit payments to a client connected to Japan's underworld.

His announcement follows the disclosure that two managing directors channelled profits from illicit trades, believed to exceed 70 million yen (£580,000), to a property firm owned by the brother of a prominent racketeer.

The affair has highlighted the sleazy ties between leading Japanese corporations and the *sokaiya*, racketeers who extort money by threatening to expose a company's dubious business practices.

Nomura has been sharply rebuked by the Government for the irregularities, which are being investigated by the Securities and Exchange Surveillance Commission (SESC). A number of Nomura's most important clients have already distanced themselves from the brokerage.

PETER TREVNOR

Malcolm Baggott, chief executive of Vitec, which is looking to make further acquisitions

Vitec ready to expand as profits rise by 19%

By Chris Ayres

VITEC, the supplier of broadcasting equipment, yesterday reported a 19 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £36.6 million (£30.7 million) for the year ended December 31.

The results come after the company's purchase, for $13.5 million last month, of Anton-Bauer, the Connecticut manufacturer of portable camera batteries. The deal was funded by the sale of Vitec's military surveillance business for £25.1 million, which also wiped out the company's debt.

Malcolm Baggott, Vitec's chief executive, says that the company is now ready to make further acquisitions.

Although Vitec already supplies video-conferencing systems, which allow people in different countries to hold meetings together, Mr Baggott said that Vitec was not interested in providing services for the Internet.

"The Internet is limited by cost and power," he said. "The technology to provide video conferencing over the Internet will not be ready for at least another ten years."

Vitec's turnover was up 13 per cent to £148.5 million (£131.8 million), and earnings per share were 55p (52.3p). A total dividend of 12.1p (10.5p) will be paid on July 1.

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BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Apple expected to shed 5,000 jobs

APPLE COMPUTER, the troubled personal computer company, is due to announce its second restructuring in less than a year, with large redundancies and a heavy quarterly loss. A continued decline in sales has forced Apple to consider cutting up to 5,000 of its 13,000 workforce, in addition to last year's 3,000 job losses. So far a corporate reorganisation by Gilbert Amelio, the chairman, has failed to stop the company's decline. Steven Jobs, the company's founder, returned two months ago as an adviser after Apple bought Next, his software company. Although Mr Jobs says he spends little time at Apple, insiders say that he has already influenced a change in top executives, and that he advocates cutting unprofitable areas of business. Many people believe he may eventually replace Mr Amelio as chairman.

Apple expects revenues for this fiscal year to drop by 20 per cent, to around $8 billion, and says that it will not make any profits until September. According to analysts, the fall in revenues means the company will have to cut at least $400 million from its costs to break even.

Babcock vacancies

BABCOCK INTERNATIONAL, the engineering group that bought Rosyth Royal Dockyard, is searching for two key directors after the resignations of Nick Salmon, chief executive, and Erik Porter, finance director. Mr Salmon is to become managing director of GEC Alsthom's power generation business, while Mr Porter is to retire by the end of the year. The departures follow appointments to strengthen the group divisional management team. Until a replacement is found for Mr Salmon, John Parker, executive chairman, will stand in as chief executive.

KBC valued at £90m

KBC ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES, the engineering group that provides consultancy and support services for the oil industry, is expected to be valued at almost £90 million when it makes its stock market debut on March 20. The company, which was founded in 1979, hopes to raise £5.3 million through the placing of 17.5 million shares on the main list. The placing is being underwritten by Cazenove & Co. KBC's pre-tax profits were £6.1 million (£2.7 million) for the year to December 31 on turnover of £27.3 million (£17.6 million).

Warning by Ransomes

SHARES of Ransomes fell 18p to 32p after the supplier of grass cutting equipment warned investors that pre-tax profits for the six months to the end of March would be substantially below current market expectations and the £6.7 million profit reported in the first half of the previous year. The company blamed weak demand in the commercial market, particularly in mainland Europe, and caution shown by consumer dealers over the winter period. Even though the main retail selling season is not yet under way, managers believe that the shortfall is unlikely to be made good in the second half.

Aquarius in ascendant

AQUARIUS, the household products group, reported better than expected results for the year ending January 31, after its flotation on the stock market three months ago. Operating profits were £4.75 million, confirming the group's forecast last year that profit before interest and tax would not be less than £4.6 million. Pro forma earnings per share were 14.38p, 5 per cent more than the pro forma forecast of 13.7p. Pre-tax profits were up 76 per cent, from £2 million to £3.54 million, helped by a 30 per cent increase in sales, from £23.4 million to £30.5 million. A dividend of 0.85p will be paid on June 18.

Rackwood lifts payout

RACKWOOD MINERAL, the Derbyshire coal mining and marketing group, reported a 30 per cent rise in pre-tax profits, from £1.41 million to £1.83 million, for the year ending December 31. Last year, the group, which has operations in Britain, France and America, received planning permission for a mine in Ayrshire, which is expected to provide 500,000 tonnes of coal every year for the next ten years. Rackwood's turnover was up 52 per cent, from £17.85 million to £27.09 million, but earnings per share fell 21 per cent, from 7.6p to 6p. A dividend of 3.3p (3p) is due on May 30.

Courtaulds Textiles to shut plants

By Sarah Cunningham

COURTAULDS TEXTILES is planning to close two factories in Nottingham with the loss of up to 340 jobs.

One of the factories, which employs 188 people, is the company's only lace-making plant in the UK. The group will continue to produce lace and supply customers from factories in France and Spain.

The other factory produces fabrics used to make women's slips and employs 159 people.

The business has declined as customers have shifted their preference to stretch fabrics.

Efforts to develop stretch polyester at the business failed to offset the fall in demand for its traditional fabrics.

Some production will be transferred to Penn Nyla in Derby and up to 60 jobs may be transferred there. Ron Alexander, chief executive of the divisions affected, said that the businesses had been struggling for some time.

He added: "Future prospects for both businesses are still very poor and there is now no alternative but to propose closure. We deeply regret the proposed job losses and will now turn our efforts to helping those affected to find alternative employment within Courtaulds Textiles or with other local employers."

Courtaulds Textiles is scheduled to report its 1996 results next week. Analysts are expecting a sharp decline in profits because of heavy reorganisation costs. After exceptionals, pre-tax profits are forecast at about £1.5 million, compared with £36.5 million a year ago.

ABP to buy Port of Ipswich for £24m

By Christine Buckley, Industrial Correspondent

IPSWICH'S port is to be sold to Associated British Ports (ABP), the company that owns 22 ports around the country, for £24 million. Half of the sum ABP pays will go to the Government in a levy.

Ipswich, as a trust port, has had the ability to privatise itself since the Ports Act was passed six years ago. After its authorities asked that it should be sold, Ipswich was put up for sale by the Government two years ago.

Sir Keith Stuart, ABP chairman, said: "Although the Port of Ipswich is expected to show only a small profit for 1996 [before privatisation costs], prospects for growth are now positive, given its excellent location and substantial spare capacity."

ABP said Ipswich would be the spearhead for its East Anglian operations.

BAT rejects smoking decision as 'sideshow'

By Paul Durman

BAT INDUSTRIES, owner of Brown & Williamson, the US tobacco company, yesterday dismissed as "a sideshow" the latest "defeat" in the industry's American legal battles.

The Mississippi Supreme Court rejected on Thursday an attempt by Kirk Fordice, the state governor, to block his own attorney-general's action to recover medical costs from the US tobacco industry.

The Mississippi ruling means the attorney-general's case will now proceed to trial in June.

A BAT spokesman said that the impact of the decision was purely procedural. "It's a sideshow. It does not have anything to do with the merits of the case, which we expect to win anyway," he said.

The $940 million suit brought by the Mississippi state is one of 22 being pursued by state attorney-generals in a bid to recover Medicaid healthcare costs.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia $	2.08	1.93
Austria Sch	20.05	18.55
Belgium Fr	58.84	54.54
Canada $	2.279	2.119
Cyprus Cyp£	0.842	0.787
Denmark Kr	10.91	10.11
Finland Mkk	8.67	8.02
France Fr	9.54	8.89
Germany Dm	2.86	2.65
Greece Dr	444	418
Hong Kong $	12.97	11.97
Iceland	120	100
Ireland Pt	1.07	0.99
Israel Shk	5.86	5.01
Italy Lira	2828	2651
Japan Yen	210.90	194.90
Malta	0.652	0.597
Netherlds Gld	3.198	2.968
New Zealand $	2.42	2.20
Norway Kr	11.44	10.64
Portugal Esc	283.00	264.50
S Africa Rd	7.52	6.82
Spain Pta	241.00	224.00
Sweden Kr	12.87	12.07
Switzerland Fr	2.45	2.27
Turkey Lira	210500	196500
USA $	1.690	1.560

Rates supplied by Barclays Bank. Other rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates at close of trading yesterday.

هكذا من الأصل

A WORKING WEEK FOR: SONU SHIVDASANI

The man on the Malé-London milk run

Jon Ashworth meets the creator of a luxury island resort in the Maldives, who plans to widen the Robinson Crusoe experience

DES JENSON

Sonu Shivdasani spends up to 90 per cent of his time in Asia, but a lot of faxes are routed through London, where much of the business is conducted

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

ANYONE seeking that quiet, stress-free break, should steer well clear of the Maldives, those glittering gems off the coast of India. For the first time in several years, the Government has put 14 islands up for auction — the latest attempt to rake in some much-needed funds. Such is the demand that each island is expected to attract between 20 and 30 bids. Gazumping has nothing on this.

Sonu Shivdasani got in early. About six years ago, he snapped up one of the more remote Maldivian islands and set about turning it into the ultimate holiday getaway. Today, his resort, Soneva Fushi, is being hailed as the "hip" new destination by enamoured travel scribes. There are plans to replicate the formula elsewhere.

None of this would be remotely of interest for this column, were it not for our hero's quintessential Britishness. Shivdasani, 31, greets me at the door of his £5.5 million home in Holland Park, west London, *fraaaatfully* well-spoken, every bit the civilised Englishman. Born in London, he attended Eton and St Catherine's, Oxford, where he read English literature, and later fell into the world of luxury hotels.

He invested in Soneva Pavilion, a hotel management company based in Bangkok, and struck upon the Maldives, where he had holidayed, as an ideal location for his first venture. Normally you cannot buy a Maldivian island as such — they are leased, typically, for $2 million to $3 million per year — but Shivdasani sensed the potential of Kunfunadhoo, his chosen patch of sand. "It's actually the largest island for development in the Maldives," he recalls, ushering me into his sumptuous living room. "When we 'bought' it, it was a lemon. No one wanted it."

The problem was the location — far from the capital, Malé, where the main airport is situated. There is the apocryphal tale of the holidaymakers who set off in a local fishing boat, or *dhoni*, and ran into fierce winds and heavy seas. It took four days to reach the island. They had a shower, were given some food, then had to rush off to catch the flight home.

Shivdasani took swift remedial action. He bought Hummingbird, the local helicopter company, and now merrily transfers new arrivals to his, and other, islands in a fleet of redoubtable Russian Mil-8 helicopters. "They're built for a military environment," he says, brandishing photographs of aquamarine sea and dazzling white sand. "They are a quarter of the price of American ones." Competition from a local float-plane operator is threatening to bite into his territory.

Fushi means "little island" and Soneva is a play on names — Sonu and his Swedish wife, Eva, a former *Vogue* cover girl, and interior designer. Classic jetsetters, they spend their weeks flitting between Thailand, the Maldives and India, and the ski slopes of Europe and North America. One will typically encounter them on Emirates — business class, of course — on the milk run between Malé and London.

Quite where the cash comes from is unclear, but the scent of old, moneyed wealth hangs heavily. Shivdasani's parents were born in India, but he might as well be English. "My father was up at Cambridge during the Partition," he says. "My grandfather suggested he didn't come back, because it was a real mess. He was a banker for a while, had a bank in Zurich, went into trading in Nigeria ..."

It is said that Shivdasani Sr once offered to buy the Dorchester for his wife, but she did not care for the place. Whatever, his son has clearly inherited his father's nose for a deal.

"I think it must be the Indian background," he laughs, uncorking a bottle from the family vineyard in Provence. "Indians are quite commercially orientated. You see them as traders. They've generally done quite well."

He certainly called the market right in the Maldives, where the Government is loath to sell off its assets to any old buyer. Of 1,190 islands in 26 atolls stretching 500 miles, only 200 are inhabited by locals. Of the 990 uninhabited islands, 74 have been developed as tourist resorts. Even after the latest bout of activity, more than 90 per cent of the islands will remain in their pristine state. "For a new country, they're actually very clever in their attitude to development. They've zoned certain islands for sand. Others for coral."

> His resort, Soneva Fushi, is hailed as the 'hip' new destination

The Maldivian Government is widening the trading base to encourage investment in offshore banking, fisheries, cargo and oil storage, transportation and textiles. British companies with a significant local presence include Cable and Wireless, currently introducing telephone services to the more isolated atolls. Anthony Nelson, the British Trade Minister, recently urged UK investors to consider sectors like construction and healthcare.

Shivdasani may be the "Mr Big" of the Maldives, with his island and helicopter interests, but he is also using the archipelago as a test-bed for greater ambitions. Opened in the autumn of 1995, his island resort could prove a model for similar boutique-style hotels under the Soneva banner.

Guests are pampered without having to dress for the occasion. Shivdasani says: "It's Robinson Crusoe, and our theme is luxuriously back to nature. That's our motto." Faxes are delivered in bamboo canisters rather than envelopes, saving paper. Guests pad about barefoot, trying not to step on the chickens and rabbits.

Shivdasani pays the Government an annual lease rental of $2,000-$3,000 per bed, plus bed tax of $6 per occupied bed night. He is seeking to unlock some capital by selling ten residential villas for a tidy $1 million each. The owners will typically use them for two to three months a year, then "lease" them back to the resort, sharing the revenue.

Soneva Fushi required a big investment, but the potential returns are good. "You're talking about a three-year payback, which is good for the hotel industry. In the Maldives, of course, you have a high fixed overhead, in terms of building the infrastructure. We generate all our power, we desalinate the water, there are jetties. That's a big initial capital cost."

Much of Shivdasani's business is routed through London, but his office, as such, is wherever he happens to be. Faxes and e-mail make global communication relatively straightforward — even in the Maldives. Typically, Shivdasani will spend the week in Malé, meeting ministers and officials, then board one of his helicopters for the 35-minute hop to the island. He stays in whatever room is available. His idea of the Friday night commute is a *dhoni* ride to a nearby sandbank, where guests are treated to evening cocktails.

The aim is to emulate other upmarket operators — more Aman than Banyan Tree — with a string of boutique resorts throughout the region. Soneva Pavilion has secured a 13-acre site near the Big Buddha on Ko Samui in southern Thailand. "The idea is to do, again, the Soneva standard — high-end, but attention to local culture and design."

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

Vietnam is among the favoured targets, even though land prices there are comparatively high. Soneva has picked up the contract to run Ana Mandara, a new 64-room resort in Nha Trang, up the coast from Ho Chi Minh City, and has its eye on similar deals. There is no competition to speak of. "A lot of the hotels are guesthouses — conversions of those Russian communist blocks."

There is also a company doctor's role to be found in Asia, where developers are often overoptimistic in their forecasts. The Thais, in particular, are fanatical about hotels — owning one is a great status symbol — and many of the ventures run into trouble. "There are a lot of distressed properties in Thailand, not meeting their original budget, not meeting their cashflow expectations, not servicing their debt. The only way out is for them to get management in to improve their performance."

Shivdasani tends to spend two to three weeks at a time in the Maldives, with side trips to Bombay, where Soneva has an office. He visits Bangkok once a month, Vietnam and Indonesia occasionally, and is not often to be found in the UK. "I will spend 80-90 per cent of my time in Asia, but a lot of faxes are routed through London. The office is here, and a lot of business passes through here." The west London mansion has just been sold — something "smaller" will suffice — and there is a cottage in Oxfordshire, left over from university days.

Back in the Maldives, celebrities continue to beat a path to Soneva Fushi's door. The resort is currently running a special aimed at scuba divers, in which anyone who fails to see a manta ray or whale shark during their stay will stay for free. Be sure to take your speargun.

HIDDEN ASSETS

Art brings splash of colour to sterile surroundings

Joanna Pitman on the formula used by SmithKline Beecham to brighten offices

Corporate art — whether it is a tapestry in a bank, a sculpture on a conference room table or a series of prints on an office wall — has an enormous responsibility. It must complement the architecture of the building, create a distinct image for the corporation, contribute to the appreciation of the arts in general and provide a counterbalance to the increased technological sterility of many office environments.

Aware of such challenges, SmithKline Beecham has decided to set up an art collection for its new offices in Harlow. The offices, however, are not naturally suited to art. One is an R&D laboratory, the other is a specialist pharmaceutical technology centre.

SmithKline Beecham understood that art in this context would not work merely as a panacea for sterile surroundings. It would have to offer more: and the choice of works was not going to be easy.

"With 450 scientists working in these buildings, we knew we would never reach a consensus," says Richard Collis, director of site operations. Therefore, he sought advice from Peter Harris, of Art for Offices.

Mr Harris says: "Choosing art to match the bold design statements of the new buildings was not easy. We were asked to select works that reflect the aspirations of the two departments.

"It was a particularly ambitious brief as most of the occupants of the buildings wanted art that had a 'wow' factor. But within that definition, some wanted abstract colourful images, others wanted figurative works with humour and varied media."

He advised the company to commission new art — abstract for the R&D laboratory and figurative for the technology centre. The result is a catholic collection of cutting-edge classics embracing both the traditional and the modern, the figurative and the abstract.

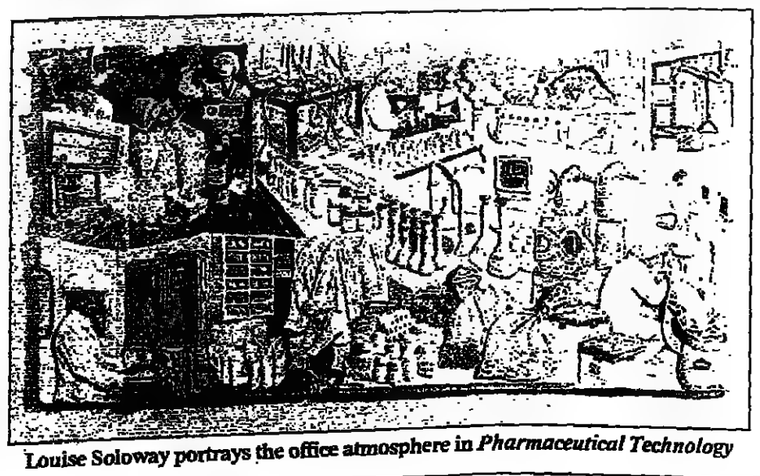
And the artists are equally varied. Graham Jones has created a curved glass sculptured screen for the entrance of the R&D laboratory. The piece is a dramatic blue, red and white angular design, a striking image that transmits a myriad of colours on to the entrance hall. He is one of the world's leading glass artists and has established an international reputation through his commissions from Coca-Cola, Kleinwort Benson and ICI. As his star continues to rise, his work is likely to become one of the jewels of the collection.

Julian Stocks has built a painted glass sculpture for the entrance lobby. It is designed to be an "engaging, linear, mental image, full of details and pictures, penetrated by a pure inspirational element that has no language but that which the viewer experiences".

David Jacobson, a stone sculptor whose work is well known in Asian corporate settings, has produced a series of sculptures that interrelate with water for the R&D office.

Sophie Pattinson has made large, abstract wall tapestries, and Louise Soloway has created a painted fibreglass bas-relief wall hanging for the pharmaceutical technology building. "On my first trip to the site I was immediately fascinated by all the complicated machinery, curious scientific devices and people looking austere in white coats and goggles. The effects of clear and translucent resins, metallic finishes and oil paints are intended to portray the atmosphere in the office."

Each artist has created a work in direct response to the office surroundings. The collection will be valuable in its specific context (the total budget was only £100,000), and that is its intention. Now Mr Collis and Mr Harris are merely awaiting a response from the staff.



Louise Soloway portrays the office atmosphere in *Pharmaceutical Technology*

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Shares dive as shakeout hits Shield Diagnostics

IN just ten minutes yesterday the share price of **Shield Diagnostics** plunged from 903p to a low of 507p as market-makers' telephones turned red hot across the Square Mile.

It followed an announcement from *Shield that ten*-year-old blood samples forming part of a US study, which Shield joined last year, had clotted. The company gave warning that analysis from the samples was likely to lead to misleading conclusions.

The news struck terror into investors who had been riding shares of Shield up from a low *of 130p this year on growing* optimism about the commercial viability of its AFT process, which can detect heart disease in the early stages.

Winterflood Securities, the market-maker specialising in smaller companies, bore the brunt of yesterday's shakeout. With the firm's 24 telephone lines jammed, all traders were *called on to help out. It is* estimated that a further 80 brokers failed to get through to execute their orders, such was the scramble.

Chris Potts, at Winterflood, said: "We didn't even get time to read the full statement, which was actually quite bullish at the end. People panicked. It was the private clients who sold. *The professional* punters were buyers of the stock at the lower levels."

In just 20 minutes a total of one million shares had changed hands. By the close of business Shield was 137½p down on the day at 667½p, having been as high as 919p with a total of 2.74 million shares traded. The price remains 64p up on the week.

Elsewhere in the biotech sector **Biocompatibles International** jumped 62½p at £12.37½ and **BTG** 50p to 672½p. **Cortecs International** was another firm market, adding 20½p at 256½p. The *group is due to publish* some bullish news on its treatment for diabetes anyday now.

Scotia Holdings rallied 35p to 445p, but still remains 160p down on the week. Earlier this week it was refused permission to market Tarabetic in *this country.*

The rest of the equity market ended the week on a high note, encouraged by an opening rally by the Dow Jones industrial average on Wall Street in the wake of Thursday's 160-point fall on interest rate fears. The FT-SE 100 index clawed back an earlier 46.7 deficit to finish at its best of the day with a rise of 26.6 at 4,424.3. That is a rise on the week of four points. A total of 917 million shares were traded.

Stagecoach *tumbled 24p to* 732½p under the threat of a £1 million fine being levied by Opraf, the railway regulator. It has told the operator of South West Trains to get its act together and live up to the *promises made in its franchise* agreement.

GEC stood out with a rise of *11½p at 394½p after Merrill* Lynch, the broker, recommended the shares as a "buy". It is believed to be telling clients that the group is planning to speed up its disposal programme and will start handing cash back to shareholders *in the shape of in*creased dividends or bonus payments. The price was also spiced by reports that GEC may have landed a £2 billion contract to build three new Trafalgar class nuclear submarines for the Ministry of Defence.

Better than expected figures from **United News & Media**, where Lord Hollick is chief executive and David Arculus chief operating officer, were rewarded with a jump of 30p at 770½p. The 12 per cent jump *in pre-tax profits to £290.2* million was accompanied by the news that margins had *also improved. Lord Hollick*, chief executive, expects to make savings of £43 million a year by 1998 as a result of the merger.

Reckitt & Colman continued to draw strength from Thursday's profits news with *a jump of 40½p at 827½p.* Panmure Gordon, the broker, is said to be recommending the shares. There is also persistent talk that a bidder *for the company will eventually emerge*. **Unilever**, up 24½p at £16.25, continues to be mentioned as a potential suitor.

Shaw & Co, the broker, has joined the growing number of supporters of **Burton Group**, *¾p lighter at 155p. It met the* company earlier this week, along with a number of institutions, and was clearly impressed. February appears to have been a good month for Burton and interim figures in May look certain to live up to expectations. Shaw has pencilled in full-year profits of £200 million.

The rest of the retail sector spent another shaky session after the latest report suggesting that some of them are having a difficult time of it. **Carpetright** fell 22p to 590½p, **Great Universal Stores** 6½p to 651p, **DFS** 9½p to 600½p, *and* **Dixons** 4½p to 509½p.

The presence of a large buyer sent shares of **George Wimpey** 7½p higher to 151½p as turnover reached 2.57 million shares. A line of one million shares was reported to have gone through the market at the 148p level.

A profits warning left **Ransomes** nursing a fall of *18p at 32p.*

Claims that **Sedgwick**, the insurance broker, is about to merge with **Willis Corroon** lifted its price 2½p to 129p. Willis Corroon closed 3p dearer at 160½p.

☐ **GILT-EDGED:** Prices closed *narrowly mixed after a* hesitant start. Brokers said there was little incentive by *institutional investors to open* fresh positions ahead of next week's inflation numbers.

The June series of the long gilt ended a tick firmer at £111 5/32 as a total of 52,000 contracts were completed.

Treasury 8 per cent 2015 was *a tick dearer at £104 21/32, while* Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was £1/16 easier at £103 21/32. The best performance was reserved for index-linked issues which ended £½ up on the day.

☐ **NEW YORK:** Shares were higher in what analysis said was a knee-jerk response to Thursday's sell-off. But bonds were muted and fears remained over the direction of interest rates. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 52.72 points higher at 6,931.62.

Lord Hollick, left, and David Arculus of United News, up 30p

PizzaExpress hovers at a high of 666p, helped by "buy" *recommendations from securities houses such as Kleinwort* **Benson and Credit Lyonnais. UBS, the company's own newly appointed broker, is also singing its praise. The group plans to open 20 new outlets.**

MOVERS OF THE WEEK

	Current price	Week's change	
Ipeco Holdings	86½p	+9p	Bid approach
Caird Group	730p	+52½	Bid speculation
Shield Diagnostics	667½p	+65p	Further speculative buying
PTS Group	122½p	-24½p	Profits setback
Scotia Holdings	445p	-159p	Tarabetic licence withheld
PizzaExpress	666p	+33p	Brokers' recommendation
Yorkshire-Tyne Tees	£11.67½	-96½p	Granada denies bid plans
De La Rue	584p	-31½p	Brokers downgrade forecasts
MAID	187½p	+15p	Bullish about prospects

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 6931.62 (+52.72)
S&P Composite 794.70 (+5.14)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 17923.04 (+23.16)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 12736.53 (-180.56)

Amsterdam:
EOE Index 766.06 (+8.05)

Sydney:
AO 2423.2 (+29.4)

Frankfurt:
DAX 3359.29 (+9.48)

Singapore:
Straits 2135.46 (-18.87)

Brussels:
General 121.50.82 (-42.53)

Paris:
CAC-40 2645.62 (+13.52)

Zurich:
SKA Gen 963.80 (+2.30)

London:
FT 30 2930.2 (+22.9)
FT 100 4424.3 (+26.6)
FTSE Mid 250 4707.8 (-12.4)
FTSE 350 2184.4 (+9.2)
FTSE Eurotrack 100 2174.00 (-9.53)
FT All-Share 2154.51 (+7.71)
FT Non Financials 2208.1 (+9.89)
FT Fixed Interest 118.91 (-0.44)
FT Govt Secs 95.24 (+0.04)
Bargains 56490
SEAQ Volume 917.1m
US$ 1.6012 (+0.0039)
German Mark 2.7212 (+0.0039)
Exchange Index 97.2 (+0.2)
Bank of England official close (4pm)
£:ECU 1.3966
£:SDR 1.1643
RPI 154.4 Jan (2.8%) Jan 1987=100
RPIX 153.9 Jan (3.1%) Jan 1987=100

RECENT ISSUES

Anglo-Welsh	103½		...
Aortech	122½		...
Aurora Inv Trust	100		...
Birmingham City	51	-	½
Calidore Warrants	1		...
Cambridge Mini Res	14	+	½
Centrica (75½)	60¼	-	¼
Core Group	325	-	3
Dobbies Grdn Ctrs	260		...
Energy Group (525)	512	-	5½
Girovend Csh Sys	188½		...
Howie	30½		...
Nord Anglo Edctn	154	-	5
Psd Group	273½	+	3
River & Merc 1st UK	100		...
Screen	5½		...
TR Euro Gwth Wts	59½	-	1
Technoplast	113½		...
Usher of Trowbridge	121	-	2½
VFG	41½		...

RIGHTS ISSUES

Grantchstr n/p (137)	40½	+	1
PTS n/p (100)	21½	-	1

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:

Alba	245p (+18½p)
BTG	672½p (+50p)
Scotia	445p (+25p)
Jarvis	238½p (+12p)
Allied Domecq	461p (+17½p)
Vitec	659p (+21p)
Guinness	487½p (+14p)
Scot & New	700p (+18½p)
Capita Group	789p (+19p)
AB Food	511½p (+12p)

FALLS:

Ransomes	32p (-18p)
Capital Inds	187½p (-21p)
Norbain	260p (-24p)
Lamont	154p (-11p)
Smart (J)	237½p (-10p)
Greencore	353p (-14½p)
Carpetright	590½p (-22p)
Stagecoach	732½p (-24p)
Scott Radio	370½p (-12p)
BAT	540½p (-14p)
Caird Group	730p (-17½p)

Closing Prices Page 49

TEMPUS

Dull but worth something

MAN ejected from *speeding train. It sounds* right, but in the case of the abrupt departure yesterday of a Railtrack director it might be misleading. Compared with Stagecoach, Railtrack is a distinctly dull business, hardly a train *à grande vitesse. The heavily regulated* company provides infrastructure and collects a toll, about as exciting as owning the M25.

That is why Railtrack's shares are in the ascendancy and why Stagecoach and the other train operators *may find that the rail* sector is a drag on their share prices. Both companies have a regulator to deal with but, as Stagecoach has found, regulation is different when your customer is an irritable *commuter. Railtrack's customers are the train* operators, who are unlikely to see their cause championed in the media.

There are other good reasons why investors might prefer the dullness of Railtrack to the train operating privateers. The track provider was sold with a huge asset base, while the train operators bought *nowt but a licence to* run trains, an income stream with a falling subsidy. Stagecoach is expecting little growth in traffic and hopes to keep profits moving by cutting costs, hence its little problem with driver shortages. Other operators are hoping for good traffic growth, a view almost endearing in its optimism bearing in mind the historic decline in passenger numbers.

Railtrack also aims to cut costs but its targets are the *maintenance contractors* who provide it with services. No consumer will squeal if their margins are trimmed. The only puzzle that remains is why the departing director deserved a three-year contract: extravagant, given the political climate.

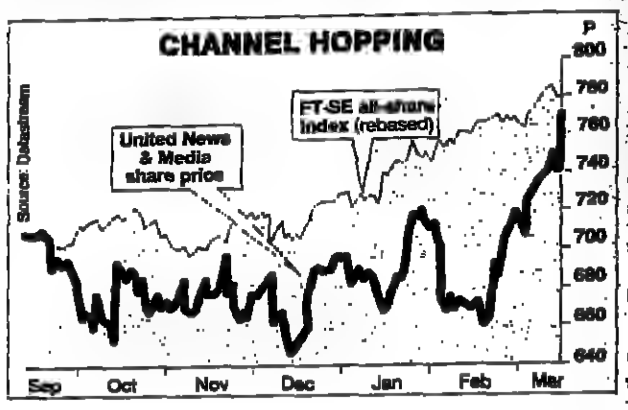
United News

UNITED NEWS & MEDIA has been so busy over the past 18 months that its 1996 results were obscured by a rash of one-off profits and losses. Thus far, the benefits of last year's merger with Lord Hollick's MAI are com*ing through strongly*. The reorganisation of the group is forecast to produce annual savings of £43 million by 1998. With the Labour peer in ebullient mood yesterday, the shares ended the day 30p up at 770½p.

Media watchers may find the television interests more glamorous and the fate of the *Express newspapers more* intriguing. But last autumn's deal with Blenheim has made exhibitions and other business services by far the biggest contributor to profits. That is what makes the recent recruitment of David Arculus, from Emap, so important. Yesterday Mr *Arculus was extolling the* powerful relationship between exhibitions and trade magazines. The strong growth at Miller Freeman looks set to continue.

At the moment, the most important project is the im*minent* launch of Channel 5, where United has a 30 per cent stake. If Channel 5 makes the traditional botched debut that seems obligatory for TV channels, City sentiment may turn *against United's shares.*

But with the advertising outlook good in a benign economy, the group's prospects look secure. Well worth buying on any signs of weakness.



CHANNEL HOPPING

Wickes

WICKES has bungled so much, it is about time for it to attempt a revival. The loss for last year was as forecast, but the 13 per cent like-for-like sales growth in the two months to the end of Febru*ary was interesting.*

With real improvement in the housing market in the past few months, it would have been appalling for Wickes not to have done well, but, nonetheless, it deserves some credit.

However, the market will expect similar figures from other DIY players, such as *Kingfisher. Having left* Wickes alone in its troubles, they will now be taking it seriously as a competitor again.

Wickes will not be left alone to consolidate its recovery and it is probably too *early to predict whether it* will be able to keep up this sales momentum.

At the end of the day, in the absence of news on the sale of its European operations, the *continuing absence of any* sign of a bid, and ahead of any sign that sales growth is sustainable, investors would do well to leave Wickes in the sin bin.

Vitec

VITEC is an astonishing company. A cursory reading of its results — flat earnings from a supplier of photographic equipment — might suggest otherwise. Indeed, the immediate outlook is not particularly wonderful. Underlying profits will hardly increase, because of the *dearer pound, but the rea*sons to own Vitec shares are its longer term potential.

The company has an effective monopoly in a very obscure market: stands for studio broadcasting equipment and tripods for profes*sional* photographers.

Its market share in the broadcast sector is 80 per cent, a situation that is tolerated because the market is too small for regulators to worry about. What is more interesting is that Vitec is highly acquisitive and contin*ues to find similar businesses* in the photographic sector to add to its album.

Since the year end, the company picked up a maker of *specialist* batteries used for broadcast equipment and the balance sheet gives it the po*tential of spending £100 mil*lion on further acquisitions.

The company is cash rich, with free cashflow, after interest, dividends and tax, last year of about £27 million.

Unfortunately, Vitec has a problem: *its tax charge is rising, a consequence of the loss* of tax privileges in its Italian manufacturing base.

Now at 27 per cent, it will rise to a normal rate over the current year, but Vitec is compensating investors by boosting the dividend. Up 15 per cent and covered more than four times, investors should expect more this year.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED

COMMODITIES

LIFFE

COCOA

Mar	1015-1010	May	1059-1058
May	1022-1021	Jul	1075-1070
Jul	1029-1026	Sep	1087-1082
Sep	1035-1030	Dec	1102-1095
Dec	1031-1030		
Mar	1047-1040		Volume: 14516

ROBUSTA COFFEE ($)

Mar	1695-1687	Nov	1635 BID
May	1685-1682	Jan	1600 BID
Jul	1675 SLR	Mar	1580 BID
Sep	1667-1660		Volume: 4511

WHITE SUGAR (FOB)

Reuters		Dec	301.5-00.5
Spot: n/a		Mar	304.5-02.0
May	307.2-06.5	May	302.0 BID
Aug	310.2-05.1	Jun	unq
Oct	302.9-01.5		Volume: 1261

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION

Average fatstock prices at representative markets on March 14

(p/kg lw)	Pig	Sheep	Cattle
G.B.	85.72	151.91	100.67
+/-(-)	+2.21	+3.15	+2.53
Eng/Wales	85.97	152.41	100.16
+/-(-)	+2.24	+3.03	-2.07
(%)	-14.0	+23.0	-11.0
Scotland	72.35	147.10	101.28
+/-(-)	-3.50	-1.89	+3.36
(%)	-30.0	-31.0	-4.0

ICIS-LOR (London 6.00pm)

CRUDE OILS ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	19.40	-0.10
Brent 15 day (May)	19.65	+0.05
Brent 15 day (Jun)	19.55	+0.05
W Texas Intermediate (May)	21.00	+0.10
W Texas Intermediate (Jun)	20.70	n/c

PRODUCTS ($/MT)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

	Bid	Offer
Premium Unld	209 (n/c)	211 (n/c)
Gasoil EEC	172 (+2)	173 (+2)
3.5 Fuel Oil	82 (n/c)	84 (n/c)
Naphtha	195 (-2)	200 (n/c)

IPE FUTURES (GNI Ltd)

GAS OIL

Apr	169.25-69.50	Jul	173.50-73.75
May	170.75-71.00	Aug	175.00-75.50
Jun	172.00-72.25		Vol: 6462

BRENT (6.00pm)

Apr	20.10-20.12	Jul	19.45 SLR
May	19.64-19.65	Aug	19.41 SLR
Jun	19.53 SLR		Vol: 24643

GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES

LIFFE WHEAT (close £/t)		LIFFE BARLEY (close £/t)	
Mar	97.80	Mar	90.50
May	98.51	May	91.25
Jul	102.00	Sep	91.50
Sep	93.50	Nov	93.50
Nov	95.50	Jan	95.00
Volume: 422		Volume: 27	

LIFFE POTATO (£/t)

	Open	Close
Apr	52.0	51.8
May	58.0	57.7
Jun	unq	69.0
		Volume: 13

RUBBER (No 1 RSS Cif p/k)

Apr 82.00-82.50

LIFFE BIFFEX (GNI Ltd $10/pt)

	High	Low	Close
Mar 97	1515	1500	1520
Apr 97	1610	1596	1610
May 97	1585	1565	1565
Jul 97	1330	1325	1330

Vol: 163 lots Open Interest: 2065

Index 1475 +10

LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

(Official) (Volume prev day)	Cash	3mth	Rudolf Wolff Vol
Copper Gde A ($/tonne)	2412.5-2413.5	2357.0-2358.0	161680
Lead ($/tonne)	690.0-691.00	691.00-692.00	212975
Zinc Spec Hi Gde ($/tonne)	1262.0-1263.0	1281.5-1282.0	664325
Tin ($/tonne)	6050.0-6055.0	6060.0-6065.0	54030
Aluminium Hi Gde ($/tonne)	1624.0-1624.5	1655.5-1656.0	249625
Nickel ($/tonne)	7970.0-7975.0	8075.0-8080.0	70334

LIFFE OPTIONS

Series		Calls Apr	Calls Jul	Calls Oct	Puts Apr	Puts Jul	Puts Oct
Alld Dom	420	20	37	44½	4	14	18½
(*447)	460	2	16	25	22	36	39
ASDA	110	4	8	9	3	6	8
(*110)	120	1	3½	5½	10	12	13½
Boots	650	32	47	58½	6	19	24½
(*675)	700	7½	20	29½	29	44	50
Br Airways	650	22	36	50	14	28	35
(*656½)	700	5	19	28	46	[illegible]	65
BP	650	32	65	75½	3	13½	20
(*680)	700	18	35	47	19	33	41
Br Steel	140	[illegible]	19	10	0½	4	6
(*155)	160	3	7	8	7½	15	17
C & W	500	19½	32	42	15½	28	35
(*500)	550	4	13	22	51	60	66
CU	650	31	75	92	9	29	42
(*698)	700	22	51	66	29	52½	[illegible]
ICI	750	22	45	54	13	26	31
(*755)	800	6	22	31	46	54½	61
Land Sec	750	4	58	[illegible]	2	15	20
(*787)	800	11	29	22	20	40	44
M & S	460	26	37	42	5	13½	15½
(*479)	500	9	14	24	24	34	37
Nat West	700	[illegible]	66	79	6	19	31
(*735)	750	10	41	52	26	41	51
Safeway plc	360	12	21	27	9	21	25
(*364)	390	[illegible]	9	16	30	40	44
Sainsbury	300	20	26	31	2	11	13½
(*316)	330	4	11	17	17	27	29½
Shell	1050	42	55	70	22	37½	45
(*1077)	1100	15	31	46	53	64	73
Smkl Bch	900	51½	75	95	14	31	41
(*943)	950	23	46	65	36	55	64
Storehse	300	—	—	—	—	—	—
(unq)	330	—	—	—	—	—	—
Trafalgar	50	—	—	—	—	—	—
(unq)	60	—	—	—	—	—	—
Zeneca	1650	53	105	143	31	89	106
(*1681)	1700	27	86	101	120	145	163

Series		Apr	Jul	Oct	Apr	Jul	Oct
BAT Ind	550	15	31	43	25	38	49
(*556)	600	4	17	25	64	72	81
Vodafone	280	15	26	32	7	15	20
(*287)	300	6	17	23	18	26	30

Series		May	Aug	Nov	May	Aug	Nov
Grnd Met	460	34	44	51	7	14	18
(*482)	500	12½	22	31	26	36	37
Ladbroke	240	9	16	20	10	14	17
(*241)	260	4	9	12	24	29	30
Utd Bisc	240	17	21	25	9	13	16
(*249)	260	6	12	16	22	25	31

March 14 1997 Tot: 75907 Call: 29563 Put: 46340 FTSE Call: 11256 Put: 21252

*Underlying security price

Series		Calls Apr	Calls Jul	Calls Oct	Puts Apr	Puts Jul	Puts Oct
BAA	500	33	44	49½	2½	12½	15½
(*526)	550	6	17	24	26	37	40½
Thames W.	650	43½	63½	67	8½	31	33½
(*684)	700	15	35	41½	28½	57½	59½

Series		May	Aug	Nov	May	Aug	Nov
BTR	260	14	21½	25½	8	11½	15
(*271)	280	6	13	16	18	22½	26
Br Aero	1350	64½	102	124	38	53	66
(*1361)	1400	41	76	97	64	78	90
Br Telcm	420	[illegible]	30½	41½	6	17	20
(*430)	460	10	18½	21½	26	40½	43½
Cadbury	500	53½	61	66½	6	10½	14
(*533)	550	17½	31½	38½	23	30	34
Guinness	460	21	32	38	[illegible]	21	23
(*473½)	500	7	15	[illegible]	40½	45	46½
GEC	360	31	36½	42	4	12	15
(*385)	390	13	21	26	15	26	29
Hanson	300	18	22½	26½	11	14	16½
(*301)	330	[illegible]	10	14	21	33	36
LASMO	240	16	22½	26	11	15½	17
(*241)	260	8	14	17½	22½	25	29½
LucasVarity	200	13	19½	23	8	10	14½
(*205)	220	5	11	14½	19	21	26
Pilkington	180	9½	14	—	6½	10	—
(*180)	200	3	6½	—	[illegible]	24	—
Prudential	550	45½	59	68	11	18	25
(*592)	600	16	32	42	34	42	49
Redland	360	24	32	39½	15	23	26
(*372)	390	10	18	26	34	41	43
R-Royce	240	14	26	32	8	12	15½
(*252)	260	9	19	22½	19	[illegible]	25½
Tesco	330	22	29½	35	8	13	17
(*345)	360	7½	15½	21	25	29	33
Williams	330	—	—	—	—	—	—
(unq)	360	—	—	—	—	—	—

FT-SE INDEX (*4399)

	4250	4300	4350	4400	4450	4500
Calls						
Mar	143	98½	56	22	6	1½
Apr	163	125	90	59½	36	19
May	197	155	122	92	66½	47
Jun	224	189½	154½	121½	97½	73½
Dec	—	304	—	242	—	193
Puts						
Mar	1	2	10	6	30	113
Apr	25	37½	53	74	100	134
May	30	42	60	[illegible]	125½	154½
Jun	64	81	97	115	141	168
Dec	—	147	—	187	—	235

Series		Calls Apr	Calls Jul	Calls Oct	Puts Apr	Puts Jul	Puts Oct
Abbey Nat	750	41½	68	81	9½	25	34½
(*775)	800	16	41	54½	32	45½	56
Amstrad	140	—	—	—	—	—	—
(unq)	160	—	—	—	—	—	—
Barclays	1100	41½	77	96	16	35½	53½
(*1117)	1150	17	51	69	42	60	74
Nat Pwr	450	49	—	—	2	—	—
(*495)	500	13	33½	33½	16½	37	43½

Series		Apr	Jul	Oct	Apr	Jul	Oct
Glaxo W	1100	34	67	85	28	46	67
(*1124)	1150	13½	44	62	58	75	95
HSBC	1500	90	129	159	23	54	81
(*1570)	1600	25	79	109½	74	104	131
Reuter	600	41½	61	71	8	19	24
(*640)	650	13½	29	44	30	41	47
Royal & Sun	460	[illegible]	44	54½	5	14	21
(*496)	500	7	27½	33	24	33	41

Series		May	Aug	Nov	May	Aug	Nov
Blue Circ	390	24	32	[illegible]	12½	18	23½
(*405)	420	9	18	24	30	34½	39½

Series		May	Aug	Nov	May	Aug	Nov
Kingfshr	650	50	61½	71	11½	27	36
(*691½)	700	19	34	45	35	43	49

Series		Mar	Jun		Mar	Jun	
Br Gas	220	12	17½	—	1	12	—
(*231)	240	2	7½	—	11	24	—

Series		Mar	Jun	Sep	Mar	Jun	Sep
Dixons	500	16½	38½	47	2	16	27
(*514)	550	0	16	25	37	44	54
EMI Group	1150	49	90	115	2	30½	49½
(*1195)	1200	13	61½	97	17	51	71½
Tarmac	100	3	7	10½	1	6	9
(*102)	110	0	3½	6	8	12½	12
Hillsdwn	180	10	13½	18	0½	7	9½
(*190)	200	0	2	6	11	20½	21
Lonrho	140	11	[illegible]	19½	0½	4	6
(*151)	160	1	6	9	10	13½	16
Sears	90	—	—	—	—	—	—
(unq)	100	—	—	—	—	—	—
Thorn EMI	1500	—	—	—	—	—	—
(unq)	1600	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tomkins	280	7	18½	24	1	10	17
(*285)	300	0½	9½	14½	15	21	26
Lloyds TSB	500	20	40	51	1	11	22
(*518)	550	0	16	27	32	41½	49½
Scot Pwr	340	5	21	26	3	14	21
(*342)	360	0	9	13½	26	41½	40
Unilever	1600	16½	54½	67	16½	56	72
(*1600)	1700	0	22½	50	100	129½	136½

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol
Long Gilt	Mar 97	111-14	111-24	111-14	111-22	187
Previous open interest: 197863	Jun 97	110-29	111-14	110-28	111-05	52544
German Govt Bond (Bund)	Jun 97	101.32	101.54	101.19	101.43	188561
Previous open interest: 240163	Sep 97	100.36	100.38	100.38	100.96	2
Italian Govt Bond (BTP)	Jun 97	125.80	125.97	125.35	125.66	56371
Previous open interest: 116016	Sep 97	125.80	125.80	125.62	125.73	75
Japanese Govt Bond (JGB)	Jun 97	126.78	126.88	126.52	126.58	1090
	Sep 97				125.20	0
Three Mth Sterling	Mar 97	93.75	93.75	93.74	93.75	3971
	Jun 97	93.55	93.58	93.54	93.57	7057
Previous open interest: 537540	Sep 97	93.33	93.38	93.32	93.37	7994
Three Mth Euromark	Mar 97	96.74	96.74	96.73	96.74	8736
Previous open interest: 1344519	Jun 97	96.72	96.74	96.72	96.73	20255
Three Mth Eurolira	Mar 97	92.63	92.64	92.60	92.62	12120
Previous open interest: 285462	Jun 97	93.01	93.04	92.94	92.98	20975
Three Mth Euroyen	Sep 97	99.32	99.32	99.32	99.32	1000
	Dec 97				99.21	0
Three Mth Euroswiss	Mar 97	98.12	98.15	98.10	98.15	1765
Previous open interest: 110190	Jun 97	98.16	98.24	98.14	98.23	4074
Three Mth ECU	Mar 97	95.74	95.76	95.74	95.75	440
Previous open interest: 35407	Jun 97	95.73	95.75	95.72	95.74	1168
FTSE 100	Mar 97	4347.0	4421.0	4345.0	4404.0	20004
Previous open interest: 74433	Jun 97	4370.0	4427.0	4365.0	4424.5	5597

MONEY RATES (%)

Base Rates: Clearing Banks 6 *Finance Hse* 6¾

Discount Market Loans: O/night high: 6 Low 5¾ Week fixed: 5⅞

Treasury Bills (Dis): *Buy: 2 mth 5⅞; 3 mth 5⅞. Sell: 2 mth 5¾; 3 mth 5¾.*

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Prime Bank Bills (Dis)	6-5⅞	6-5⅞	6⅛-5⅞	6⅛-6	
Sterling Money Rates					
Interbank	6⅛-6	6⅛-6⅛	6⅛-6⅛	6⅜-6¼	6⅝-6½
Overnight: open 5⅞, close 5¾					
Local Authority Deps	6	n/a	6⅛	6¼	6½
Sterling CDs	6-5⅞	6⅛-6	6⅛-6⅛	6⅜-6¼	6⅝-6½
Dollar CDs	5.40	n/a	5.50	5.68	5.97
Building Society CDs	6⅛-6	6⅛-6⅛	6⅛-6⅛	6⅜-6¼	6⅝-6½

TREASURY BILLS: *Applicts. £1,857m allotted: £400m. Bids: £98.54% received: 46%:* Last week: £98.55% received: 51%: Avge rate: £5.9452% last wk £5.7980%: Next week: £400m.

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Currency	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	Call
Dollar:	5⅜-4¾	5⅜-5⅛	5⅝-5⅜	5⅞-5⅝	5-4
Deutschemark:	3⅛-2¾	3⅛-3⅛	3⅛-3⅛	3⅜-3⅛	3⅛-2⅞
French Franc:	3⅜-3	3⅜-3⅜	3⅜-3⅜	3⅝-3⅜	3¼-2⅞
Swiss Franc:	2-1¾	2-1¾	1⅞-1⅝	1⅞-1⅝	2⅛-1¾
Yen:	⅝-⅜	⅝-⅜	⅝-⅜	⅝-⅜	1-par

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

Bullion: ***Open*** $352.90-353.30 ***Close:*** $352.40-352.90 ***High:*** $352.90-353.40 ***Low:*** $352.20-352.70 **AM:** $353.00 **PM:** $352.80

Krugerrand: $351.50-353.50 (£219.50-221.50)

Platinum: $352.75 (£220.90) **Silver:** $5.30 (£3.305) **Palladium:** $152.25 (£95.45)

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Mkt Rates for March 14	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Amsterdam	3.0585-3.0662	3.0594-3.0623	½-¼pr	2¼-2¼pr
Brussels	56.020-56.230	56.062-56.168	14-9pr	41-34pr
Copenhagen	10.370-10.404	10.378-10.387	½-¼pr	½-¼pr
Dublin	1.0225-1.0255	1.0230-1.0251	5-1pr	15-8pr
Frankfurt	2.7177-2.7256	2.7192-2.7214	¼-¼pr	2-1¾pr
Lisbon	273.00-273.92	273.44-273.74	½-½ds	½-½ds
Madrid	230.52-231.49	231.14-231.30	9-1pr	31-13pr
Milan	2700.0-2716.6	2709.0-2711.8	24-40ds	70-92ds
Montreal	2.1732-2.1842	2.1823-2.1842	0.58-0.53pr	1.18-1.09pr
New York	1.5942-1.6013	1.6005-1.6013	0.925-0.725pr	0.258-0.227pr
Oslo	10.943-10.984	10.963-10.972	½-¼pr	½-¼pr
Paris	9.1660-9.1940	9.1702-9.1868	2½-2pr	6½-6¼pr
Stockholm	12.337-12.443	12.415-12.433	½-¼pr	½-¼pr
Tokyo	197.11-197.97	197.42-197.63	¼-½pr	2½-2¼pr
Vienna	19.128-19.178	19.138-19.154	1-¾pr	1¾-1½pr
Zurich	2.3361-2.3459	2.3383-2.3411	½-¼pr	2½-2¼pr

Source: Extel *Premium* - pr. *Discount* - ds

DOLLAR RATES

Australia	1.2531-1.2539
Austria	12.00-12.01
Belgium (Com)	35.14-35.18
Canada	1.3634-1.3639
Denmark	6.5081-6.5101
France	5.7517-5.7537
Germany	1.7043-1.7048
Hong Kong	7.7440-7.7470
Ireland	1.5564-1.5584
Italy	1696.25-1697.70
Japan	123.80-123.90
Malaysia	2.4770-2.4780
Netherlands	1.9158-1.9163
Norway	6.8585-6.8657
Portugal	171.20-171.40
Singapore	1.4340-1.4350
Spain	144.59-144.64
Sweden	7.7807-7.7857
Switzerland	1.4628-1.4638

OTHER STERLING

Argentina peso*	1.5967-1.5984
Australia dollar	2.0011-2.0036
Bahrain dinar	0.5945-0.6005
Brazil real*	1.6807-1.6851
China yuan	13.050-13.350
Cyprus pound	0.8040-0.8160
Finland markka	8.0575-8.1735
Greece drachma	424.0-431.0
Hong Kong dollar	12.3625-12.3719
India rupee	56.64-57.60
Indonesia rupiah	3701.0-3850.0
Kuwait dinar KD	0.4785-0.4885
Malaysia ringgit	3.9540-3.9581
New Zealand dollar	2.2870-2.2910
Pakistan rupee	63.40 Buy
Saudi Arabia riyal	5.7375-5.9615
Singapore dollar	2.2875-2.2921
S Africa rand (com)	6.9820-7.0840
U A E dirham	5.7875-5.9115

Barclays Bank GTS * Lloyds Bank

FTSE VOLUMES

3i	1,900	Land Secs	504
ASDA Gp	7,600	Legal & Gn	4,500
Abbey Ntl	3,000	*Lloyds TSB*	11,400
Allied Dom	2,000	LucasVarity	6,000
Argos	5,700	Marks Spr	7,100
AB Foods	660	Mercury Asset	559
BAA	2,400	NatWst Bk	13,200
BAT Inds	35,000	Nat Grid	7,200
BG	30,000	Nat Power	2,000
BOC	355	Next	1,200
BP	8,600	*Orange*	3,300
BSkyB	3,200	P & O	673
BTR	21,200	Pearson	1,700
BT	10,200	PowerGen	5,000
Bk of Scot	1,600	*Prudential*	3,400
Barclays	4,000	RMC	909
Bass	1,500	RTZ	34,400
Blue Circle	1,300	Railtrack	3,500
Boots	1,500	Rank Group	4,000
BAe	1,400	Reckitt Col	3,400
BA	1,900	Reed Intl	1,200
Brit Steel	12,000	Rentokil	14,500
Burmah Cstl	1,400	Reuters	2,900
Burton	3,300	Rolls Royce	3,000
Cable Wire	3,000	Ryl & Sun	13,500
Cadbury	6,300	Royal Bk Scot	2,200
Carlton Cms	4,100	Safeway	3,000
Centrica	21,800	Sainsbury	7,100
Cm Union	2,100	Schroders	128
Dixons	1,800	Scot & New	3,100
EMI	551	Scot Power	2,100
Energy Gp	4,000	Svrn Trent	716
Enterpr Oil	2,100	Shell Trans	6,900
GKN	649	Siebe	785
GRE	6,100	SmKl Bch	4,400
GUS	1,900	Smith Nph	3,700
Gen Acc	502	Smiths Inds	556
Gen Elec	10,600	Std Chartd	2,500
Glaxo Well	3,900	TI Gp	750
Granada	2,700	Tate & Lyle	340
Grand Met	3,700	Tesco	5,600
Guinness	5,700	Thames W	737
HSBC	2,900	Tomkins	6,600
Hanson	3,800	Unilever	3,800
Hays	1,500	Utd Utilities	780
ICI	2,100	Utd News	2,000
Imp Tob	2,900	Vodafone	9,100
Kingfisher	1,500	Whitbread	1,100
LASMO	5,300	Wolseley	807
Ladbroke	3,400	Zeneca	2,800

WALL STREET

	Mar 14 midday	Mar 13 close
AMP Inc	37½	38½
AMR Corp	84½	84½
ASA	36½	36½
AT & T	35½	35½
Abbott Labs	58½	58½
Advanced Micro	47	47½
Aetna Life	90½	90
Ahmanson (HF)	40½	40½
Air Prod & Chem	73½	72½
AirTouch Comm	25½	25½
Alberto-Culver B	26½	26½
Albertson's	36½	35½
Alcan Aluminum	37	36½
Allied Signal	73½	72½
Alum Co of Am	74½	73½
Amax Gold Inc	7½	7½
Amerada Hess	53½	53
Amer Brands	52½	52
Amer El Power	40½	40½
Amer Express	64½	64½
Amer Genl Corp	42½	42½
Amer Home Pr	65	64½
Amer Intl	123½	123
Amer Stores	44½	43½
Amer Standard	46	46
Ameritech	61	61
Amoco	87	87
Anheuser-Busch	43	42
Apple Computer	16½	16½
Archer Daniels	19	19½
Armco	4	3½
Armstrong Wrld	70½	70½
Asarco	31½	30½
Atl Richfield	129½	125
Auto Data Prn	43	44
Avery Dennison	42½	42½
Avon Products	58	57½
Baker Hughes	37	37½
Baltim Gas & El	26½	26½
Banc One	44½	44½
BankAmerica	115	114½
Bank of NY	38½	38½
Bankers Tr NY	88½	88½
Barnett Banks	48½	47½
Bausch & Lomb	38½	37½
Baxter Intl	46	46½
Becton Dickinson	47	47½
Bell Atlantic	63½	63½
Bell Industries	22	21½
Bellsouth	43	42½
Black & Decker	34½	33½
Block (H&R)	30	29½
Boeing	105	103
Boise Cascade	32	32
Brist Myrs Sq	64	63½
Browning Ferris	29	29½
Brunswick	29	28½
Burlington Nthn	82½	82½
CMS Energy Corp	31½	31
CNA Financial	111½	114½
CPC Intl	83½	83½
CSX	51	49½
Campbell Soup	92½	91
Can Pacific	25½	25
Carolina Pwr	36½	36½
Caterpillar	67	70½
Central & SW	25	25½
Champion Intl	43½	43½
Chase Manhat	101½	99
Chevron Corp	67	66½
Chrysler	31	31½
Chubb Corp	56	56½
Cigna Corp	156	154½
Citicorp	116½	117½
Clorox	121	120½
Coastal Corp	46	46½
Coca Cola	59½	61
Coca Cola Ent	62½	61½
Colgate-Palm	106½	106½
Columbia Gas	60	59
Columbia/HCA	41½	40½
Compaq Comp	77½	78½
Comp As Intl	47½	47½
Conagra	54½	53½
Conrail	112	112½
Cons Edison	30½	30½
Cons Nat Gas	52	52½
Cooper Inds	46	46½
Corestates	52½	51½
Corning Inc	44½	41½
Crown Cork	54½	54
Dana Corp	32	31
Dayton Hudson	43½	42
Deere	43½	43½
Delta Air Lines	85½	85
Deluxe Corp	32½	32
Digital Equip	36	36
Dillard Dept St	31	31½
Disney (Walt)	74	73½
Dominion Res	39	38½
Donnelley (RR)	36	36½
Dover Corp	53½	52
Dow Chemical	83½	83½
Dow Jones	43	43
Dresser	37½	36½
Duke Power	43	43
Dun & Bradstreet	26	26
Du Pont	112	111
Eastman Chem	55½	55½
Eastman Kodak	85	84
Eaton Corp	73½	72½
Edison Intl	21½	21½
Elect Data Sys	44	44½
Emerson Elec	50½	[illegible]
Engelhard Corp	23½	23½
Enron Corp	40½	40½
Entergy	25½	25½
Ethyl Corp	9½	9
Exxon	103½	103
FMC Corp	66½	65½
FPL Group	44½	44½
Federal Express	54½	54
First Bk Sys	80	79½
First Union Rlty	13	13
Fleet Finl Grp	60½	60½
Fluor Corp	64	64½
Ford Motor	32	31½
GTE Corp	45½	45½
Gannett	82½	81½
Gap Inc Del	35½	35½
Gencorp	19½	19½
Gen Dynamics	66½	65½
Gen Electric	102½	102½
Gen Mills	62½	62½
Gen Motors	57	57
Gen Reinsurance	166	166
Gen Signal	41½	40
Genuine Parts	47	47½
Georgia Pac	77½	77½
Gillette	80½	79½
Glaxo Wellc ADR	36	35½
Goodrich (BF)	40½	41
Goodyear Tire	53½	53½
Gt Atl Pac Tea	27½	27
Great Wstn Fin	46½	45½
Halliburton	68	68½
Harcourt General	47	47
Heinz (HJ)	42½	41½
Hercules	49½	49½
Hershey Foods	48½	48½
Hewlett Packard	55½	55½
Hilton Hotels	28½	28
Home Depot	57½	57
Homestake Mng	16½	16½
Honeywell	73½	72
Household Intl	97	96½
Houston Inds	21½	21½
Humana	22½	22½
ITT Corp	59½	[illegible]
Ikon Office	38½	38
Illinois Tool	88½	87½
Illinova	23½	23½
INCO	36½	36½
Ingersoll Rand	47½	47½
Inland Steel	20	19
Intel Corp	142	141½
IBM	143	142
Intl Flav & Fr	46	46½
Intl Paper	42½	42½
James River Va	37½	37½
Jhnsn & Jhnsn	59½	[illegible]
Kellogg	67	66
Kerr-McGee	63	63
Kimberly-Clark	107	107½
Kmart	12½	12½
Knight-Ridder	40½	40½
Lilly (Eli)	85½	85
Limited Inc	19½	19½
Lincoln Nat	61	59½
Litton	41½	40½
Liz Claiborne	43	43½
Lockheed Martin	85½	85
Louisiana Pac	21½	21½
MCI Comm	36½	35
Manpower Inc	38½	38½
Marriott Int	51	50½
Marsh & McLnn	127	127
Masco Corp	37	36½
May Dept St	48½	48½
Maytag Corp	22½	22½
McDonalds	44½	[illegible]
McDonnell D	65½	63
McGraw Hill	51½	50½
Mead Corp	58½	58
Medtronic	64½	64
Mellon Bk	82½	82
Merck Inc	87½	86½
Merrill Lynch	94½	93½
Microsoft	98½	97½
Minnesota Mine	91	90½
Mobil Corp	127½	126½
Monsanto	40½	39½
Morgan (JP)	106½	106½
Motorola Inc	56	55½
Natl Semi	29½	29½
Natl Service Ind	37½	37½
NavStar Int	9½	9½
NY Times A	44½	44½
Newmont Mng	44½	44½
Niag Mohawk	8½	8½
Nike B	65	64½
NL Industries	11½	11½
Noram Energy	15	14
Nordstrom	37½	39
Norfolk Sthrn	95	95½
Nthn State Pwr	47	46½
Norwest Corp	50½	49½
Nynex Corp	47½	47½
Occidental Pet	24½	24½
Ohio Edison	21½	21½
Oracle	40	38½
Oryx Energy Co	19½	19
Overseas Ship	16½	16½
Owens Corning	43½	42½
PHH Corp	48½	48
PPG Industries	56½	56
PNC Bank	43	42½
PP&L Res	21½	21½
Paccar Inc	71½	72
Pacificorp	20½	20½
Pac Enterprises	30½	30½
Pac Telesis	39½	39
Pall Corp	23½	23½
Parker Hannifin	45½	44½
Peco Energy	21	20½
Penney (JC)	49½	50
Pennzoil	52½	52
Pepsico	31½	31½
Pfizer	92½	91½
Pharm & Upjhn	38½	38½
Phelps Dodge	76½	75½
Philip Morris	126½	126
Phillips Pet	40½	40½
Pitney Bowes	62½	63½
Polaroid	41½	41½
Procter & Gmbl	122½	121½
Providian	58½	57½
Pub Serv E & G	26½	26½
Quaker Oats	37½	36½
Ralston Purina	83½	87½
Raychem Corp	86½	86
Raytheon	46½	46½
Reebok Intl	44½	44½
Reynolds Metals	64½	63½
Rockwell Intl	66	66
Rohm & Haas	80½	80½
Royal Dutch	175½	172½
Rubbermaid	24½	24½
SBC Comms	54½	54
Safeco Corp	39½	39½
St Paul's Cos	70	70
Salomon Inc	54½	53½
Sara Lee Corp	39½	39½
Schering Plough	79½	78½
Schlumberger	107½	106½
Seagram	38½	38½
Sears Roebuck	55½	55½
Shell Trans	102½	102½
Sherwin Wlms	55½	55½
Skyline Corp	23½	23½
Snap-On-Tools	40½	40½
Southern Co	21½	21½
Sprint Corp	43	42½
Stanley Works	39½	39½
Sun Company	27½	27½
Sun Microsys	30½	29½
Suntrust	52½	51½
Supervalu	30½	30½
Sysco Corp	34½	34½
TRW Inc	55½	54½
TCC Inds	1½	1½
Tandem Comp	12½	12½
Tandy Corp	52½	52½
Temple Inland	55½	55½
Tenneco	40	39½
Texaco	100½	100½
Texas Inst	85	83½
Texas Utilities	36½	36½
Textron	102½	101½
Time Warner	41½	41½
Times-Mirror A	54½	54½
Timken	54½	53½
Torchmark	59½	59½
Toys R Us	28½	28½
Transamerica	90½	90
Travelers	53½	52½
Tribune	39½	39½
Tyco Int	50½	50½
UST Inc	32½	32½
UAL	68½	68
US Inds	38½	38½
US West Comm	33½	33½
US West Media	19½	19½
USAirways Group	25½	25½
USX Marathon	26½	26½
Unicom	21½	21½
Unilever NV	188½	184½
Union Camp	49½	49
Union Carbide	48½	47½
Union Pacific	59½	59½
Unisys Corp	6½	6½
USF&G Corp	22½	22½
US Life	47½	47½
United Tech	76½	75½
Unocal Corp	38½	38½
VF Corp	68½	68½
WMX Tech	33½	32½
Wal-Mart Stores	28½	28½
Warner-Lambert	86½	84½
Wells Fargo	307½	308
Westinghouse El	19	18½
Weyerhaeuser	47	46½
Whirlpool	50½	50½
Whitman	23½	23½
Winn Dixie	32½	32½
Woolworth	22½	22½
Wrigley (Wm) Jr	59½	58½
Xerox	61½	60½
Yellow Corp	15½	15½

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Make the most of Britain's currency gains

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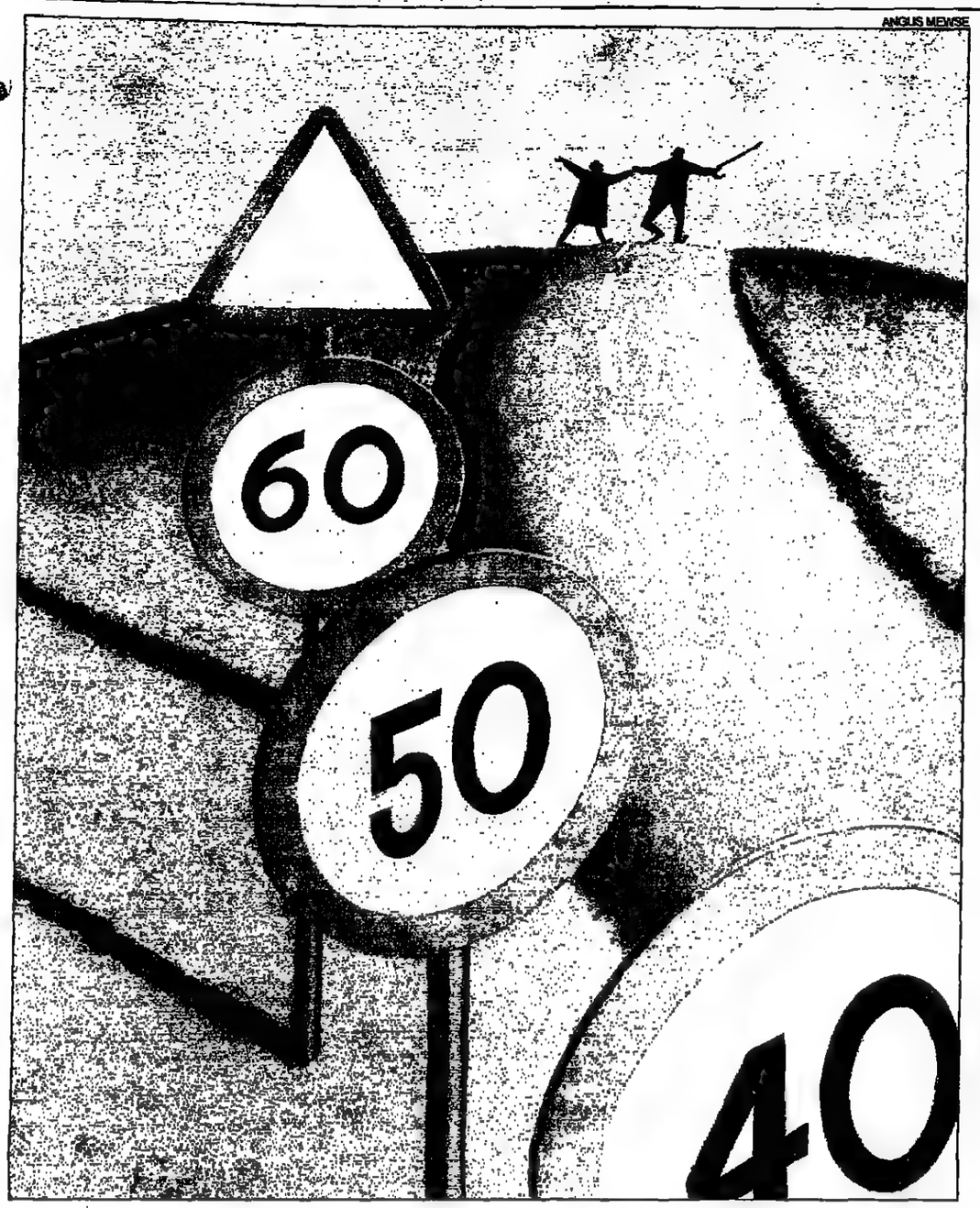
THE TIMES: PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR



Care policy has limited appeal

Marianne Curphey reports on the Government's proposals to provide for retirement needs

Pensions and long-term care are fast moving to the forefront of election debate. The Conservatives are continuing their drive to encourage us to plan for our retirement, a period of our lives which today can begin at 50 and last for another 40 years.

After their announcement last week of plans to privatise the state pension system and compel the nation to make adequate retirement provision, John Major and his colleagues turned to the complex problem of paying for long-term care, a big concern among many middle-income voters.

Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, unveiled a long-term care "partnership scheme" based on schemes operating in several US states. If his party emerges triumphant at the election, a new Community Care (Residential Charges) Bill implementing the proposals would be immediately presented to Parliament. In response to the Dorrell plans, the Labour Party said that, if it formed the next government, it would establish a royal commission to look at the funding problem. In this case, a solution could be years away.

Under the Dorrell scheme, anyone with assets and savings of more than £16,000, including their home, will have the option of buying an insurance policy to "ring-fence" and protect their capital from means testing. Mr Dorrell's draft Bill proposes that, for every £1 of private insurance a person buys, the local authority will disregard £1.50 worth of assets when it means-tests applicants for care.

Insurers believe that the Government chose the figure of £1.50 rather than £2 for every £1 of insurance bought because of the open-ended nature of the commitment. Mr Dorrell wished to limit the cost to the taxpayer.

While the politicans argue over which arrangement is most viable, each week 800 elderly people are having to sell their home to pay for long-term nursing home care, which costs between £350 and £500 a week. There is a one-in-four chance that an individual will need constant care in a home in their last years. Long-term care costs the State £22 billion a year, or 3.6 per cent of gross domestic product, and, as the population ages, these figures will increase.

Anyone applying to their local authority for help with residential care bills is means-tested. Only people with total assets worth less than £10,000 can have the whole of the cost of their care paid for by the State.

Those with assets worth more than £10,000 have to make a contribution to the cost which rises on a sliding scale according to what capital they have. Those with assets of more than £16,000 have to pay the entire bill.

Under the proposals, to protect a house worth £60,000, a person would have to find approximately £50,000 worth of insurance value. This is the difference between £10,000 — the amount that would have been wholly disregarded anyway — and £60,000.

Since the Government will give £1.50 for every £1 of insurance, the actual amount of insurance the owner needs to find is about £33,000.

The insurance premiums will vary between individuals and will be greater for women than for men, since women are expected to live longer.

According to the Department of Health, an average lump-sum premium of about £7,000 in the case of a man and £11,000 for a woman would protect a property worth £80,000 under the scheme. For a man, an £8,000 premium would protect a £100,000 home and £9,000 would safeguard property worth £120,000. The proposals also allow people to top up residential care arranged by the local authority from their own resources. The DoH figures are much lower than those quoted by leading providers of long-term care.

Insurers claim the scheme will help only a limited number, mainly those whose homes and assets are worth £40,000 to £70,000. This is because a pensioner with a home worth £60,000 would need insurance to cover £44,000 of assets, allowing for the Government's disregard of £16,000. For a male non-smoker aged 65, such a premium would be an estimated £8,929 or £55 a month for cover for three years, according to Bupa, one of the leading healthcare providers.

Someone with a £90,000 home would need to protect £74,000 worth of assets and to pay a single premium of £15,085. This is prohibitively high for many.

The proposals have received a muted response from insurance companies and from charities. PPP lifetime care claims that twice as many people, or two million, would have benefited from a £2 for a £1 scheme. Bupa says Mr Dorrell's proposals would be of "significant benefit to those with assets of £60,000 or less, which is around 750,000".

Consumer groups are anxious that insurance companies may raise premiums for those with a family history of senile dementia or Alzheimer's disease. Paul Seymour, chairman of the Continuing Care Conference, a coalition of commercial and charitable organisations, said: "If you are in need of care, you should get care, regardless of your income."

Sally Greengross, director-general of Age Concern England, said: "To have an insurance policy to protect assets you need a good income and an asset worth protecting."

Counting the cost today, page 34

Sara McConnell on a concession to members denied free shares

Disabled win victory over A&L exclusion

Campaigners for disabled and elderly people excluded from building society bonus payouts won a victory this week when the Alliance & Leicester agreed to examine ways of making charitable donations to disabled people or charities after it becomes a bank.

The A&L concession will not allow excluded savers to qualify for free shares. But its move will be seen as a positive attempt to make amends to thousands of members excluded from receiving free shares worth up to £5,000. *The Times* has consistently highlighted the plight of disabled and elderly building society savers who cannot handle their own financial affairs and whose accounts are held in trust by friends, relatives or care staff. Under bonus schemes proposed by the Halifax, Woolwich and Alliance & Leicester, such savers are excluded from receiving free shares if their society becomes a bank because they are not the first named on the account. Societies have consistently argued that only first-named members qualify for bonuses.

Written confirmation of the A&L concession came just hours before the society was set to come under fierce attack in the House of Commons by Douglas French, the campaigning backbench MP. Mr French is piloting a Private Member's Bill through Parliament that would allow payments to be made to any saver whose account is held in trust. The Bill could receive Royal Assent by early next month.

In a letter to Mr French, John Caine, the A&L head of corporate affairs, stressed the society's sympathy with the aims of the French Bill. It continued: "With this in mind, it is intended that an item will be placed on the agenda of the PLC board after flotation to seek approval in principle for the provision of funding for an appropriate charitable donation to disabled persons or

continued on page 35

WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

Please take your money back

PERSONAL INVESTOR

GRAHAM SEARJEANT

Everyone loves a tax break, except the other taxpayers. But we do not care to admit it. Elaborate theories are developed to justify on higher grounds the schemes the Inland Revenue hates. Only if the tax break is removed do we really learn if this was a brilliant idea or just a distortion.

Last autumn, the Chancellor finally stopped subsidising companies' capital payouts to pension funds. Some £7 billion was paid out last year. Companies can still pay special dividends to all shareholders on the normal tax basis. But schemes that focused on those who gained the tax break lost their gloss.

The most popular method was the share buyback. Companies would use "surplus" funds to buy their own shares and cancel them. Financial gurus insisted that this benefited all shareholders. If the surplus funds earned less than interest on borrowed money, which was usually the case after all taxes are taken into account, earnings per share would rise and all would benefit.

The process, however, benefited some shareholders more than others. Buybacks were treated as distributions, to the extent that the price exceeds nominal value. Those not liable to tax could claim back the imputed dividend tax, making shares sold at market price worth up to 25 per cent more. Companies' brokers stood in the market buying or just contacted big fund managers representing pension funds. Smaller independent funds and charities usually did not get a look-in, let alone low-income private shareholders.

Once this tax benefit was lost, buybacks faced a new test. Had directors suddenly become humble, volunteering that others could invest money better? Or were they just under pressure from fund managers, who waved the threat of a takeover bid unless they came up with the cash to boost that year's returns?

Genuine cases arose, for instance, when one arm of a group was sold, where returns from expanding the main business fast were diminishing or where a company that did well in the past was adjusting to a slower rate of growth. Short-term financial engineering still features. Clever finance directors exploit relatively low interest rates to replace expensive equity capital with loans. The ensuing higher risk will not appear in the accounts.

Techniques are also changing. Barclays has so far had three goes recently at trying to buy back £300 million of stock in the market, but each time found that offering a modest premium brought a modest response. Barclays insists this is theoretically superior to a special dividend, since earnings benefits are concentrated on the remaining shareholders. Buybacks are perhaps better used to support a share when its price, or the market as a whole, is weak.

Private investors might prefer the principle that all should be treated equally. Where companies return capital on a modest but semi-regular basis, special dividends have much to commend them, until the next tax change. For a genuine one-off scheme, Iceland Group, advised by Natwest Markets and Rothschild, appears to have come up with something better.

This week, the frozen food group offered all shareholders a goodly premium for three eighths of their shares, with an option to take more of less to the extent that preferences cancel out. The company will then rely on strong cashflow to service heavy borrowings and to generate higher returns in a much tougher market for food retailing. It is doing so by a scheme of arrangement designed to minimise capital gains problems. Fortunately, it has only 10,000 shareholders, which makes the exercise cheaper.

This scheme is untried, so snags may lurk. But there are already signs that removing the tax break will remove distortions. Investors expect most companies to invest on their behalf, but know that diversification away from a big, low-growth business is often a costly failure. In such cases, money should be returned in ways carefully tailored to the needs of all shareholders

Helen Pridham on the options for long-term care

Protection of assets is the biggest worry

The Government's proposals to encourage long-term care insurance for the elderly announced by Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, earlier this week will only come into force if the Tories are re-elected.

If Labour takes over they are likely to be shelved while a royal commission reviews the situation. This leaves people reaching retirement now with a dilemma. Should they or shouldn't they take out insurance or is there other action they can take to offset the erosion of their assets should they require care later in life?

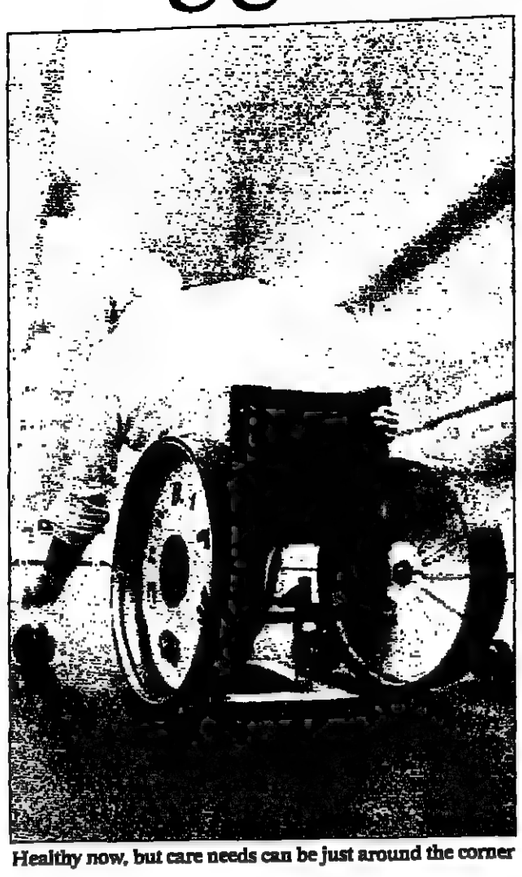
The first thing to bear in mind is that the likelihood that you will actually need long-term care is fairly low. Sally Greengross, director-general of Age Concern, has expressed concern that the problem may be exaggerated.

She warned against "scaremongering", saying: "It's crucial that older people understand that around one in 20 people are currently in long-term care. When you reach the age of 85, your chances of needing long-term *care are only one in four.*"

The main worry for many older people is what will happen to the capital tied up in their home if they need residential care. They want to leave this asset to their children. *Although it will not be* taken into account as long as it is still lived in by your spouse or another relative aged over 60, or a younger relative who is "incapacitated", it will be taken into account otherwise and, if it is valued at over £16,000, the local authority will expect you to pay care fees.

Many people wonder if they can get round this problem by giving away all or part of the value of their home in advance. The snag is that this could be regarded as "deliberate deprivation". If it is decided that you have knowingly given away assets to avoid paying for care, a local authority may assess you as if you still had the capital.

If assets are transferred within six months of a person entering a home or while you are in a home, a local authority has powers to recover *money from the person* to whom the assets were given. If the transfer is made more than six months earlier the position is uncertain.



Healthy now, but care needs can be just around the corner

Age Concern says an authority could still consider that you are capable of payment but says it is not yet clear to what extent councils will pursue such debts.

If you transfer all or part of your interest in your home to adult children who subsequently become involved in acrimonious divorce proceedings, its value may be counted in a divorce settlement. In view of these uncertainties, anyone considering a transfer of assets is strongly advised to take detailed legal and financial advice first.

Remember that, even if you do enter a care home and have to pay the fees, it may not deplete your capital as much as you fear. The average stay is relatively short. According to Ms Greengross: "Many older people die shortly after they enter residential or nursing home care."

An alternative is to take out *long-term care* insurance in advance. The leading company in the field, PPP, says that it will allow anybody who takes out one of its policies now to switch to a new contract when the Government *finally legislates* on partnership arrangements. "We have promised that policyholders will not be financially disadvantaged," says Paul Bennett, PPP spokesman.

You can buy a long-term care policy by means of monthly premiums or a lump sum and PPP will then pay out an agreed level of benefits in the future if you are unable to care for yourself. For example, a 65-year-old man who wants to insure for annual benefits of £10,000 for as long as he requires care would currently have to pay a monthly premium of £56.53 *or a lump sum of* £5,400. A woman of the same age would have to pay £65.77 or a lump sum of £7,891.

It is important to be aware, however, that these policies will pay out only if you are deemed to be unable to perform a number, usually three, "activities of daily living" (ADLs), such as being unable to move around from one room to another, to feed yourself or maintain a reasonable level of personal hygiene. They will not pay out simply because you or your family feel it appropriate for you to move into a care home if you *do not* meet these criteria.

Graham Hooper of Chase De Vere, independent financial adviser, feels the criteria can be too strict. He says: "Once people have progressed to such a severe level of *disability, they often do not* have long to live anyway and these ADLs may not cover people with Alzheimer's. It will depend on what degree of the disease they are suffering."

Another option is to wait and see *if you actually need* care and then buy an "immediate needs" annuity. According to the Government's proposals this week, people who take out these products will have the same level of asset protection as everyone else. Commercial Union, for example, offers such a product called Continuing Care Plan.

The enhanced payments under these policies are not based on ADLs but are calculated on an assessment of each individual's state of health and life expectancy. Although they are not cheap they put a cap on potential outgoings.

For example, a man of 75 in "very poor" health would currently have to pay £48,500 in return for lifelong care payments of £10,000 per annum. The risk is that if you die shortly after entering care the remaining capital is lost to your estate.

☐ Further information can be obtained from Age Concern by sending a 9in x 6in SAE to Age Concern England's Information & Policy Department, 1268 London Road, London SW16 4ER.

Nice ad, shame about the sales

COLUMN

ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance Editor

The dazzling power of celebrity can, it seems, move any product but the Pep. Harry Enfield makes us say "yes" to Hula Hoops, while Helen Mirren seduces passengers to stretch out in spacious Virgin seats. But even the august figure of Lord Lawson of Blaby, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, in its TV advertising campaign did not succeed in enticing investors into the new M&G personal equity plan.

The development suggests a welcome change in Pep buying habits. The *Which?* approach to Pep picking is beginning to replace the view that one Pep is much the same as another. Rather than being swayed by claims of double-digit returns, investors want detailed information about a fund management group's track record and its ability to outpace its peers in the future. This data is now readily available, doubtless to the dismay of M&G and other underachieving groups. As we report on page 37, M&G's latest Pep, a complex split-capital scheme, failed to impress because investors were suspicious. Those who ploughed through the small print guessed that M&G would find it hard to keep both the income and "zero" shareholders happy. Others had heard about, or experienced, the disappointing performance of M&G's two previous Pep offers. This was a victory for consumer power that any Chancellor, past or present, would surely applaud.

Action, not words

PETER LILLEY, the Social Security Secretary, has become the latest minister to talk tough to the life insurance industry. Westminster's latest favourite pastime. Last week Angela Knight, his Treasury colleague, rebuked Sir Andrew Large, the chief investment watchdog, for his failure to resolve the personal pension déhâcle.

Not to be outdone, Mr Lilley has now issued a threat to those insurers who have yet to compensate the 600,000 customers wrongly sold personal pensions. The culprits must start writing cheques now, or be excluded from the select list of those entitled to sell Basic Pension Plus, the proposed state pension substitute. Curiously it is not clear whether they will also be shut out from the lucrative market in long-care term policies, another Government proposal.

Mr Lilley's criticism of the insurance companies is well deserved, but long overdue. Ministers could have spoken out about these abuses five years ago when the scandal first came to fight. Instead it allowed the insurers to find one pretext after another to avoid their liabilities. Both Labour and the Tories will need to rely on the insurance companies to implement their pension policies. But they must learn to keep them in check, or rue the consequences.

DENZIL McNEELANCE

Hazel Ward and son Matthew are pleased at the Alliance's change of heart but disappointed that individual members will still not receive shares

Excluded members gain concession

Continued from page 33

to a charity or charities on their behalf, subject of course to the approval of the company's shareholders."

Charities and other campaigners cautiously welcomed the news. Ray Ward, a Weekend Money reader who has been campaigning on behalf of his son, Matthew, said: "It's good news. I'm glad they have moved. But are they going to give the money to the right people and how much will they give?" He added that it was disappointing that individual members would not get shares. Matthew is a member of both the Alliance & Leicester and the Halifax and stands to lose out twice.

Age Concern also wanted more detail about the proposals. It said: "We would welcome this as a positive move but we would want it [the fund] to include the vulnerable. People might not be registered disabled but still need protection."

Pam Harman, honorary secretary of Bristol Mencap and an active campaigner, was more outspoken and accused the society of being "condescending". She said: "They are not doing justice to people. They are not treating them like anyone else and that is discrimination."

Mencap's head office acknowledged the Alliance & Leicester's announcement as a step in the right direction but said it would continue to press other societies to follow suit.

So far they have shown no signs of doing so. In the Commons this week, Douglas French accused the Halifax of making a "fundamentally flawed" and "deeply offensive" judgment in excluding millions of members, including disabled people, from bonus payouts. He continued: "If the Halifax continues to act like a hard-nosed bank before it has even become one and continues to spoil the good reputation that building societies have enjoyed over so many years, I for one hope that its customers will decide in their millions to move their accounts elsewhere on the grounds that it is not a society in which they would continue to hold their savings."

But David Gilchrist, the Halifax's general manager, said: "We do believe our share-out is fair and 98 per cent of our members supported it at our special meeting which we believe indicates broad satisfaction. This was not a dominant issue at the SGM and we wouldn't wish to delay payouts to our members."

The Halifax is refusing to commit itself to putting discussions on charitable donations on the agenda of the board after it becomes a bank, although it says it is not closed to the principle of charitable donations. It argues that it already gives significant amounts to charity.

Sara McConnell on a trust to protect your heirs

SIMON WALKER

It is vital to use qualified lawyers to draw up a will outlining your exact wishes if you want to avoid an expensive day in court

The relative problem inherent in wills

What do you do if you want to cut someone out of your will? How do you make sure someone you dislike or distrust does not get their hands on your hard-earned cash after you have gone? This may sound like a scene from a bad melodrama (lawyer reads out will to assembled company, excluded party gasps and falls down in dead faint), but according to Richard Bark-Jones, a solicitor and wills expert at the Law Society, requests for such wills are on the increase. He said: "Often it is *the spouse of the son or daughter who is* the target of mistrust." But solicitors do not always know how to write wills that will achieve the desired object, as one Weekend Money reader found.

Mrs Wilson (not her real name) is concerned that her daughter, who is in her thirties but cannot work through disability, should have an income to live on when her parents die. The Wilsons want to arrange for the capital realised from their estate, *including their home and various investments*, to generate income for their daughter throughout her lifetime. They also want her to be able to draw capital if she needs a lump sum at any time.

But they do not want their son-in-law to have access to either the income or the capital. Mrs Wilson fears he would squander the money rather than "saving it for a rainy day". Attempts to have their existing wills rewritten to make sure the money goes to its intended recipient, however, foundered when the Wilsons' solicitor proved unhelpful.

According to Mr Bark-Jones, the Wilsons, and anyone else wanting to direct their will specifically, should set up a life interest trust. In the Wilsons' case this works as follows:

- Mr and Mrs Wilson write wills leaving *everything to each other*. Whoever dies first leaves everything to the survivor.
- *On the death of the last survivor*, the estate is left in trust to their daughter. She will have the sole right to the income from the capital from the estate invested on her behalf. Her husband will not have access to this income or to the capital.
- The capital realised from the estate will be invested by up to four chosen executors, who are also responsible for paying income to the Wilsons' daughter. The executors can be chosen by the Wilsons and *may include friends*, relatives, the solicitor who set up the will, other professionally qualified people, such as accountants, and the Wilsons' daughter herself if she chooses.
- The executors are responsible for investing wisely and making investment decisions. They may sub-contract such decisions to a stockbroker or other adviser although fees would be paid by the estate.
- The Wilsons can set up the trust specifically to give the executors powers *to pay out lump sums from the capital* as and when their daughter needs it. This would of course erode the capital available to be invested.
- If the Wilsons' daughter and son-in-law divorce, he would have no right to any of the capital. Her income would be part of the divorce assessment, along with his.
- Solicitors' fees for setting up life interest trusts vary but will probably be about £150.

Efficient executors are the key to making such a trust work, Mr Bark-Jones says. There is no guarantee that an estate will continue to generate income for life because this depends on calls on the capital as well as other imponderables such as stock market performance.

Another difficulty, which concerns *Mrs Wilson, is that the high cost of* long-stay care in a residential or nursing home could force the sale of the family home before the death of both the parents, and thus reduce the value of the estate. This is a real fear, given the present Government's determination to make people pay unless they have negligible assets or have taken out an expensive insurance policy.

Gavin Lumsden finds caution before the election

Unwilling to gamble on trusts

TRUST WATCH

M&G has failed miserably to interest investors in its new high income split-capital investment trust. This week the company revealed it had attracted only £20 million of new money into the fund, a fifth of its target and miles short of the £217 million it raised for its Equity Investment trust last year. This was in spite of an expensive TV marketing campaign fronted by Lord Lawson of Blaby, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The lukewarm response to the trust is highly embarrassing for M&G as income funds are the bread and butter of the Pep season. The main advantage of Peps for most people is the freedom from income tax that their money enjoys. Choosing an income fund — one that focuses on stocks that pay good dividends — has become a well-worn route for investors. Even if you do not require the income, you can watch it roll up in the tax-free environment.

Unfortunately for M&G, the 6.3 per cent annual income the fund offered was not enough to induce investors and their financial advisers to wade through the complicated marketing literature.

The company was also hampered by the fact that there are plenty of similar income trusts already. Besides, investors are more risk-averse than usual with the market at record highs and in the run-up to the general election.

Income funds divide into three groups: those based on unit trusts, investment trusts (such as M&G High Income) and corporate bond Peps.

Income unit trusts are a bit of a misnomer, however, yielding 4 to 5 per cent annual income but achieving good capital growth as well. Indeed many financial advisers reckon the combination of capital and income growth when put in the tax-free shelter of a Pep makes them the best buy around.

Peter Edwards of Premier Unit Trust Brokers in Bristol says: "By and large income funds have proved to be such good consistent producers of capital growth, that we use them for all our clients."

One of the most consistent is Jupiter Income which is currently beating all its peers over two, three and five years. According to the latest Premier survey of income unit trusts, this fund achieved a magnificent total return of 211 per cent in the five years to January 1. Of this 119 per cent came as income in the form of dividends with the rest in capital growth.

MARC ASPLAND

A safer bet? Mr Mulligan wins the Cheltenham Gold Cup

This kind of performance makes income funds ideal for the over-50s, says Mark Dampier of Churchill Investments. "They can begin by reinvesting the income to get a good total return and then start to take the income later when they retire. This avoids any expensive switching between funds or potential capital gains tax problems."

The focus on dividends is also useful when stock markets fall. In 1987 when share prices collapsed dividends dipped temporarily. Advisers also like the investment discipline that income funds impose on fund managers. Mr Dampier says: "Generally income managers choose out-of-favour stocks that will give them a sustainable and increasing dividend yield. This often means that they buy at the bottom and sell at the top, which is exactly what they are supposed to do, whereas funds focusing on capital growth can get stuck with fashionable and overpriced stocks."

However, this approach does not mean income funds only focus on small companies. BT, for instance, has not provided a great capital return but has grown the dividends by over 10 per cent a year since it floated in 1984.

William Littlewood, manager of Jupiter Income, looks for secure companies in markets that are hard for others to break into: London Clubs, the casino group, is a prime example.

However, his fund has trebled in size to £450 million since last year, raising fears that Mr Littlewood will find it difficult to maintain his performance record in future. Last October, Fund Research, the trust analysis group, downgraded from its top triple star rating to a double star. Mr Littlewood dismisses this, saying the growth in the fund only slightly increases the difficulty, which is more than compensated by Jupiter's stock picking approach.

Other worthy UK income unit trusts are GT Income, Lazard UK Income, Mercury Income, Perpetual Income, Framlington Monthly Income and Newton Income. Prolific High Income has established a good long-term record but slipped last year. It has also just lost its fund manager, Tim Gregory, to Gartmore, the rival investment house.

For income investors wanting international diversification Perpetual has just launched its World Income Pep. Investing in seven of the company's income, growth and fixed-interest funds the Pep aims to yield 4 per cent a year. The minimum lump sum investment in the Pep is £500 with a monthly savings scheme starting at £20.

Alternatively, investors who want no exposure to the UK at all can go for funds such as GT International Income. Although an overseas portfolio reduces the risk of one market falling, it does put you in danger of currency movements. The rise in sterling last year ended a string of good performances for the fund which was forced to cut its dividend by 20 per cent to just under 3 per cent.

WEEKEND MONEY SPECIAL REPORT ON PENSIONS

Fears for the loss of higher-rate relief under Labour

When we read that Labour may be considering the removal of higher-rate pensions tax relief, we became concerned to make the best use of these concessions while they are available.

I contribute about 5 per cent of my salary into a company scheme, while my husband has a number of small pension plans but pays premiums intermittently. What is the maximum we can both contribute?

Lizzie H. London

Weekend Money replies: As a member of a company pension scheme, you can receive full tax relief on up to 15 per cent of your earnings paid into the scheme.

However, since April 1988, the amount you can put into a pension has been subject to an earnings cap; currently set at £82,000 per year. The only exception to this is if you hold an old-style retirement annuity contract. The other main restriction is that the total pension must not exceed two thirds of final salary.

Provided these limits are met, you will not be taxed on your employer's contributions to the scheme or on the growth of your pension investment.

If your contribution is currently less than 15 per cent of your earnings, you can make up the difference by paying additional voluntary contributions (AVCs) into your employer's scheme or or by making free-standing additional contributions (FSAVCs) to a scheme operated by a life insurance company.

These benefits mean that you may be well advised to make sure that you are paying in the full 15 per cent of your salary.

If you fail to contribute the full 15 per cent during the year, you cannot carry forward the unused relief. However, your husband can make good his past failure to exploit the reliefs. If you do not use your maximum annual personal pension tax relief it can be carried forward for up to six years.

There are two types of personal pension, the personal pension plan and its pre-1988 antecedent, the retirement annuity contract. With both schemes you get tax relief on contributions at your highest rate, but there are differing scales of limits on the amounts that you can pay into the scheme every year.

These limits are worked out as percentages of "net relevant earnings" (income minus any allowable deductions such as expenses). In the case of personal pension plans, the maximum contributions start at 17.5 per cent of net relevant earnings for those below the age of 36.

Between the ages of 36 and 45 the figure is 20 per cent, and thereafter it increases by 5 per cent every five years up to 40 per cent for those above the age of 61.

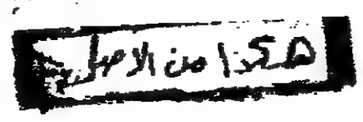
With retirement annuity contracts, the maximum contributions scale starts at 17.5 per cent for those under 51. Between 51 and 55 the figure is 20 per cent, between 56 and 60 it is 22.5 per cent. The top rate is 27.5 per cent for those over 61. In the case of personal pension plans the ceiling of £82,200 on annual earnings that can be taken into account applies.

NATHAN YATES

Wait at your peril

PUTTING off your pension planning is becoming an increasingly expensive business, according to Mark Bolland, technical manager of Chamberlain de Broe (Gavin Lumsden writes). He has calculated that people who wait until they are 50 to start a pension have to pay over four times the amount a 30-year old would, just to get a basic no-frills plan.

For instance, a 30-year old male on £30,000 salary wanting to retire at 60 will on today's annuity rates need to build up a fund of £205,000 by the year 2027. Assuming investment growth rates continue at an average annual rate of 4 per cent he will need to put aside £3,650, or 12 per cent of his income. If he waits until 40 to set up a basic plan his annual contributions will have to be £6,900. At 50 he would have to pay in £17,000.



WEEKEND MONEY SPECIAL REPORT ON PENSIONS

ROLAND LEON

Victims: Margaret and Sam Oakley felt they were so badly advised they stopped paying into their personal pension halfway through its term

Not much to retire on — just £16 a week

Sara McConnell on the case of a personal pension that did not fulfil the clients' needs

In 1989 insurance salesmen were buzzing like bees round a honeypot of potential customers. Deregulation of the pensions industry the previous year unleashed a selling frenzy as takers were sought for insurance company personal pensions.

Sam and Margaret Oakley, both in their late forties, signed up. Now, along with many others, they are angry at what they see as the poor income they expect to receive from their investment. The Oakleys invested £164.58 a month between the beginning of 1989 and the end of 1995. To date, the couple have contributed between them £11,800. Yet Norwich Union estimates that, on their present contribution record, if no more contributions are made Mrs Oakley would receive a minimum of £16 per week on retirement and Mr Oakley a minimum of £32 a week when he retires five years later.

Mrs Oakley said: "We would have been better off putting the money in the bank." Norwich Union said the low monthly contributions combined with the decision to stop paying less than halfway through the expected term until they retired meant charges had eaten into their investment.

Norwich Union is by no means one of the highest charging insurance companies. Last month *Money Management*, the specialist magazine, said NU had below average charges and above average performance. But personal pensions are not designed for small contributions over short terms. In some cases, almost all the contributions in the early years can be lost in charges.

The Government's radical pension reforms, announced last week, assume a key role for personal pensions sold by insurance companies. But many people taking out compulsory personal pensions in which their state pension contributions can be invested, will have paid-in only the minimum. The Government says pensions will become cheaper because they will be compulsory. Pension providers will come from a list approved by regulators. But this has not reassured those who point to the regulators' failure to force companies to compensate hundreds of thousands of people who were wrongly advised to leave company schemes and buy personal pensions in the late 1980s.

Margaret Oakley was 47 in 1989 and working for a small company, where she had no pension. She recalled: "There was a flurry of salesmen coming into the office offering us opting-out, topping-up and everything. We saw two or three people a day." She sought advice from the company's accountant, who advised a Norwich Union plan for her and her husband. But by the end of 1995, the Oakleys had become disenchanted with the plan's performance and stopped their contributions. Norwich Union responded to Mrs Oakley's complaints by telling her that any problems were the responsibility of the adviser who sold her the policy.

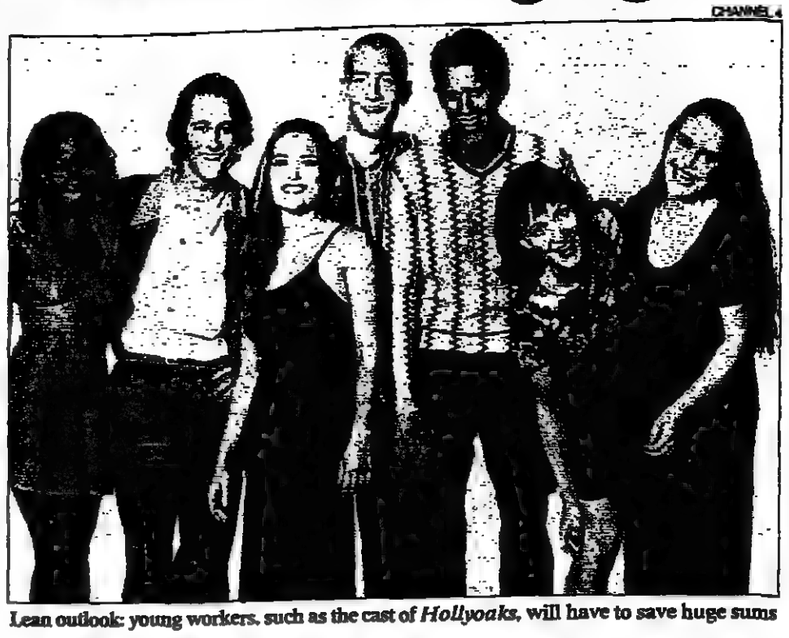
Mrs Oakley says Norwich Union should have scrutinised pension applications when they were first received and urged potential customers making small contributions to invest elsewhere. NU says it accepts applications without question because it assumes salesmen would have given the right advice.

The devastating effect of pension charges combined with stopping a plan early is shown by figures from Bacon & Woodrow, the actuary. According to its figures, if no charges had been levied the Oakleys could have expected an £18,056 fund in 1995, rolling up to £55,355 if they had contributed for the full 20 years to a competitor's policy. A plan which spread the charges across the policy would have produced £15,828 after six-and-a-half years and £42,371 after 20 years. A plan taking charges in early years would have produced £16,064 and £29,924.

WEEKEND MONEY SPECIAL REPORT ON PENSIONS

Pensions could cost three times mortgages

Sara McConnell says the young still cannot rely on the State for a comfortable retirement



CHANNEL 4

Lean outlook: young workers, such as the cast of *Hollyoaks*, will have to save huge sums

Rising generations of teenagers and young workers may face an impoverished retirement if they rely solely on their state pension, despite the prospect of better basic pensions being held out by the Government last week.

Figures calculated exclusively for *The Times* show that a 25-year-old on average earnings will have to save £1,800 a year out of taxed income on top of compulsory contributions to the proposed state scheme in order to retire on a pension of two thirds of final salary at 65. Higher earners who delay topping up pensions until they reach 35 will have to set aside £7,200 a year.

Peter Lilley, Social Security Secretary, has announced radical changes to state pensions. Central to his plans is that the next generation's state pension contributions will be invested in private pension plans run by insurance companies, which could mean larger basic payouts.

The Department of Social Security claimed that individuals on average earnings with a full work record could expect a pension of at least £175 a week at today's prices from the proposed Basic Pension Plus. But, according to William Mercer, the actuary, a 25-year-old on average earnings of £18,000 will have to put £150 a month into his pension on top of what the State invests for him to ensure a good pension.

A 35-year-old earning the national average who has not previously made extra contributions will have to pay in £225 a month. At higher earnings of £36,000, a 25-year-old would have to contribute £420 a month, while a 36-year-old would have to contribute as much as £600. This is nearly three times the £265 monthly cost of repayments on an average £40,000 mortgage, says the Halifax Building Society.

All contributions will have to be made from taxed income. In an attempt to help cashflow during the changeover to the new system, workers contributing towards Basic Pension Plus will get no tax relief on contributions as in the existing system. Instead the pension payments will be tax-free.

But even making maximum contributions does not guarantee a good pension. William Mercer's figures assume these people join the proposed Basic Pension Plus at 21 when starting work and continue to build up state pension throughout their working lives until 65.

In reality, many people, particularly women, take career breaks or stop work for other reasons, so would not have a complete work record for a maximum state pension. They would have to make more contributions of their own for a decent pension. The figures also assume that pension investments will grow at 4.25 per cent a year excluding inflation, the growth assumption made by the Government Actuary in calculating the possible payout from an invested state pension. But as thousands of dissatisfied personal pension holders know to their cost, growth projections are little more than an educated actuarial guess.

The actual return depends on unknowables such as interest rates, inflation and government policy, as well as the insurance company's own skill in investing the contributions. The return also depends on the level of charges extracted by the insurance company for managing the funds. Personal pensions have been heavily criticised for levying excessive charges, which include large commission payments to salesmen. Charges directly reduce the growth rate.

The Government has refused to reveal its assumptions about the level of charges on personal pensions under Basic Pension Plus. It argues that, as personal pensions will be compulsory and provided only by companies from an approved list, present high levels of charges will be forced down. According to William Mercer, the Government has calculated that charges will cut the return from pension investments by about 0.8 per cent a year.

But Tim Keogh of William Mercer says the most expensive pensions reduce the return by more than 1 per cent. The Government also appears not to have catered for the additional cost of buying stock market investments with pension contributions, normally 5 per cent, says Mr Keogh.

Karen Zagor explains how to get the best price for society shares

Just pick up the phone

If you are one of the millions of lucky savers whose building society is being taken over or converted to a bank, you stand to make a nice profit. For example, members of National & Provincial, who received shares in Abbey National when it was taken over by the bank, have seen the share price soar from 567p to 775p.

But the only way to realise these profits is to sell the shares. You will increase your profits if you shop around for the least expensive execution-only share dealing service. They are geared to the small investor and tend not to provide the advice offered by more expensive brokers.

Mark Bolland of Chamberlain de Broe, an independent adviser, said: "With execution-only you need to be 100 per cent sure you know what you are doing. When you pick up the phone you need to be very clear about how many shares you have, when you want to sell and how you want the money sent to you. You can't do it without the stock certificate to hand."

Here Weekend Money gives a selection of the best share dealing offers.

Good old days: today's execution-only telephone services are a far cry from 30 years ago

■ **Abbey National** has a share dealing service available to anyone over 18. You can use it to buy or sell shares in any company quoted on the London Stock Exchange. Charges start at 1.65 per cent for the first £2,500 of shares, with a minimum of £24.50. The next £2,500 is charged at 1.25 per cent of value, falling to 0.15 per cent for additional amounts over £5,000. For family or multiple sales there is a £6 charge per extra certificate.

The bank offers a less expensive, and more limited dealing service by post. Charges start at 0.75 per cent for the first £5,000 with a minimum charge of £17.50, but you can only trade in 12 shares plus those in the privatised water, electricity and power companies. Abbey National Share Dealing Services 0121 233 2333.

■ **Barclays Bank** offers a more extensive execution-only dealing service called Share Deal. You can register free, and once registered you can get opinions and prices on more than 250 shares. The telephone service will tell you whether brokers are advising people to buy, sell or hold and why, as well as explaining any dramatic share price movement. Calls are charged at a higher rate. You can pay for transactions by cheque or direct debit. The charges are 1.5 per cent for the first £5,000, 0.85 per cent for the next £10,000 and 0.5 per cent thereafter with a minimum £17.50 commission. Its postal execution-only sharedealing service charges a flat rate of 1 per cent with a £10 minimum. Register at any Barclays branch or on 0345 776776.

■ **ShareLink**, an execution-only broker has a range of services. New customers can usually deal on their first call and the service is open seven days a week, with late hours from Monday to Thursday. For those who trade infrequently, ShareLink Plus handles occasional transations with charges of 1.5 per cent for the first £2,500, falling to 0.75 per cent for the next £1,666, with a £20 minimum.

Investors who plan to trade a bit more often can open a Market Master account which charges 1 per cent for the first £2,500, followed by 0.75 per cent for the next £2,500 and 0.1 per cent for the next £6,250 with a £10 minimum. This functions like a nominee account, but investors retain all their shareholder priveleges. You can keep cash in the account, which earns interest, until you are ready to invest and hold unit and investment trusts and gilts in the account. ShareLink does all the paperwork and charges £6 a quarter for administration.

ShareLink also has a Frequent Traders Club which has an annual charge of £60, plus quarterly administration charges of £6. You then pay only £16.50 per transaction, no matter how large the deal. This account also gives investors access to information, financial news and a newsletter written by investment experts. In addition, ShareLink has a postal dealing service and an Internet dealing service. For more information ring: 0121 200 7788.

■ **City Deal**, another execution-only specialist, has four services. Its most basic telephone service has a minimum commission of £9 for deals up to £500, rising to £10 for deals up to £1,000 and £17.50 for deals up to £2,000. Maximum commission is £40. Before making a deal, City Deal needs to have the money to hand, either though a debit card, cheque or through a special account set up for trading.

City Deal's next account, Phone Trade Gold, charges minimum commission of £15 for deals up to £1,000, rising to £20 for deals up to £2,000, and £27.50 for amounts up to £30,000. There is also a one-time registration fee of £10 for both accounts. If you open a linked trading account, you only have to pay 25 per cent of the share purchase price up front. 01708 738688.

■ **Cater Deal Direct** account has an annual fee of £18 plus VAT. Commission starts at £9 for dealts up to £500, rising to £10 for deals of up to £1,000 and £20 for deals up to £2,000. When trading, you speak directly to a dealer instead of a telephone operator, which should give you access to better prices. City Deal also has a less expensive postal service. For more information ring: 01708 742288.

Nathan Yates looks at cheap springtime loans and

Why pay £1,600 too much for a £5,000 car?

At this time of year many bank balances have had a hard winter. Those seeking extra cash face a bewildering range of loans, and finding the best deal can be a problem.

Suppose the au pair's car is about to give up the ghost after years of abuse by a succession of young drivers or a burst of sunshine and daffodils turns one's thoughts to some wind in the hair driving. The cost of a sound second or third car could be as much as £5,000, and lenders will be queueing up to offer a sum of this size. You may be tempted to borrow from the nearest bank or building society, but this option can be costly.

Call Clydesdale Bank and it will offer you an unsecured loan for a punishing £1,810 over three years. Pick a building society and you could pay £1,612.84 in interest at the Halifax, though there are better deals available to existing customers. At the very luckiest you could approach Midland Bank who would charge you £1,149.52. And if you want to insure your loan, expect to pay up to £2,197.48 at NatWest. What the borrower really needs to know is which are the cheapest deals in the whole moneylending market?

A survey by *The Times* shows that good loans can come in surprising guises. The cheapest way to borrow £5,000 over three years is via a secured personal loan from Clydesdale Bank. The monthly repayment on a loan here would be £154.96, and the total interest paid is just £578.45.

Clydesdale's offer is very attractive if you are positive you can meet the repayments. But if there is any possiblity of a mishap, borrowers must beware. Loans of this type are usually secured on your house, so if you default, your home could be in jeopardy.

The conventional wisdom is that borrowing large sums on a credit card is for the feckless only. But in fact, if you don't want a secured loan, Co-operative Bank's Advantage card is the cheapest option. A £5,000 debt costs only £832 after three years if regular repayments are made. And Advantage borrowers also benefit from the flexibility and convenience a credit card offers.

Cheap borrowing deals available to gold card and gold chargecard holders is a similar case but to get either form of plastic you have to be a medium to high earner.

However, if your salary is more than £20,000 a year and you still want to borrow £5,000, Co-operative Bank's base rate-linked card will keep the cost to £835.96 at today's rates. The Bank of Scotland's Premier Visa charge card overdraft facility would also keep interest charges at 8.8 per cent APR provided you earn more than £25,000 per year, though a borrowing period of three years would be unusual.

If your earnings are below gold levels, a more poverty-friendly way of borrowing cheaply is through a credit union. The maximum a registered credit union is allowed to charge is 12.68 per cent APR, and in many cases the rate is lower. Some charge no interest at all at certain times of year.

Even at the maximum rate, a £5,000 loan from a credit union would cost just £978.37 over three years. But only those eligible for credit union membership can get this kind of loan. To be a member, you must be part of a registered collective body such as a church, a workplace or a residential area. You can check if you are eligible by ringing the Association of British Credit Unions on 0161-832-3694.

Unsecured personal loans would usually be a recommended option for a medium-term, medium-sized debt, so it may come as a surprise that this form of borrowing is the most expensive in *The Times* survey. But a loan of this kind presents some advantages.

The repayments are fixed from the moment you sign an agreement, so you can budget ahead with full knowledge of what and when you will pay. Also, there is no chance of a damaging rise in interest rates, whereas other borrowing methods such as credit cards suffer fluctuations.

The cheapest unsecured loan at present is Lombard Direct's. A £5,000 loan would cost £995.99 over three years. If you want to insure your unsecured loan, the price will be considerably greater. With insurance, the best deal is Northern Rock's, at £1,759.36.

Whatever loan you choose, read the small print thoroughly before signing. Watch for pitfalls such as charges for early repayment. Before you take on debt, always use all other resources. However cheap the deal, you will pay a higher rate of interest for credit than you will earn on savings. Keep borrowing for truly rainy days.

£5,000 LOAN OVER THREE YEARS

LOAN TYPE	BEST DEAL	APR	MONTHLY PAYMENT	TOTAL COST
Unsecured personal loan (uninsured)	Lombard Direct	12.9%	£166.53	£5,995.99
Unsecured personal loan (insured)	Northern Rock	12.9%	£187.76	£6,759.36
Secured personal loan	Clydesdale	7.8%	£154.96	£5,578.45
Credit Union	n/a	12.68%	£166.07	£5,978.37
Credit Card	Cooperative Advantage	7.9% to 31.03, then 10.9%	£160	£5,832
Gold Card	Cooperative Base (rate linked)	10.5%	£162.11	£5,835.96
Gold charge card overdraft	Bank of Scotland	8.8%	n/a	n/a
Loan secured on insurance	Standard Life	8.4%	£157.11	£5,655.96

sets about finding the best rates for borrowing on your credit card


CHRIS SMITH

Prince Naseem: big spender

Featherweight champ is heavyweight spender

A major weapon in the battle for customers now being waged by the charge and credit card companies is the reward scheme where cardholders receive points or goods for purchases made (see below). The value of these schemes is hotly debated. This week, for example, People's Bank, one of the US card players now attacking the UK market, argued that people preferred lower interest rates. Ron Urquhart, People's Bank UK managing director, claimed: "Barclaycard holders would need to spend £9,000 over two years and pay £269.20 in interest charges to gain a cordless kettle worth at most £40."

But American Express continues to believe that, for its customers, especially the favoured few with platinum cards, points are irresistible. Among its platinum card big spenders is Prince Naseem Hamed, WBO and IBF world featherweight champion who holds more than 100,000 American Express reward points in his gloved hands after spending £100,000 on clothes during a recent two-day spree in New York. The reward points the boxer has accumulated means he can further indulge his taste in haute couture — and for free. For 65,000 points he can fly to Milan, with Continental Airways. Under the Amex reward scheme, every £1 charged to the card equates to one membership rewards point.

Edwin Buckhalter, 48, chairman of Severn House Publishers, in Sutton, has held a Platinum Card for 18 months and believes that the rewards scheme and the service make it well worth paying the £375 a year fee for the card. As he travels for three or four months a year, the reward points accumulated are all spent on business flights around the world with Swissair. "It's clichéd, but points really do make prizes," he says of the rewards scheme which has meant he is holding on to approximately a quarter of a million unspent miles.

LIZANNE ROSE

Cashback offered as competition grows

Competition is growing fiercer in the formerly sedate credit card world where once Barclaycard reigned unchallenged. The last year has seen the launch of more than 100 cards, most with rates well below the 20.3 per cent still charged by Barclaycard and the other traditional players in this £48 billion market.

The aim is to grab the free-spending but creditworthy customer who makes frequent use of his plastic but is seldom in a position to repay the full balance each month. Special low-rate deals are often available to those transferring a debt from another card company.

This week the Alliance & Leicester celebrated its last few weeks as a building society with the launch of its own card, offering cashbacks for money spent. Holders will pay an annual percentage rate (APR or true rate) of 17.9 per cent for purchases and 12.9 per cent for amounts transferred from other cards.

Later this month the Nationwide, which is determined to remain a building society, also plans to offer a card, with an APR of 16.9 per cent and a transfer rate of 9.9 per cent. Both cards undercut Barclaycard and the other credit card divisions of the big banks but are still less competitive than the UK arms of the American card operators, such as RBS Advanta and People's Bank of Connecticut. However, the Alliance & Leicester does have a fresh gimmick — the cashback. This is a new variation on the reward schemes attached to other cards where customers get air miles and shopping discounts. During 1997, Alliance & Leicester cardholders will receive 1 per cent of all purchases up to £3,000 and 2 per cent on all purchases above this figure. This means that if you spend £6,800 with your card you will get a £106 cheque next January. The normal cashback rates will be 0.5 per cent on purchases up to £3,000 and 1 per cent thereafter.

Those contemplating switching to the A&L card or one of the other new cards can make substantial savings, as a *Times* survey shows.

A £5,000 debt with Barclaycard would currently attract 22.3 per cent APR after the 56-day interest-free period ends. Over six months, the cost would mount to £483.

But transfer your debt to the People's Bank where a transfer rate of 14.4 per cent APR applies and this figure would be reduced by £144 to £339. Better still, move it to RBS Advanta's Visa card (transfer rate 9.9 per cent) or to MBNA (transfer rate 9.9 per cent cent) and it would shrink to £241.80.

Move it to the new Alliance & Leicester card and the special transfer rate of 11.9 per cent APR plus the cashback of 2 per cent would save you £264. This means you would pay less than half the original charge. On a smaller debt the interest costs are less damaging, but even if you owe just £2,000 it is still possible to make significant savings; £2,000 over six months at Barclaycard would cost £193.20.

By transferring the balance, this can be reduced by up to £97.20 on the Money Back card. And switching your balance would cost nothing because there is no annual fee. Sometimes the transaction can even be made over the telephone.

Despite the advantages of the new deals, traditional UK cards are currently holding their own in the market. The latest figures show that 62 per cent of cards in issue in Britain are from Barclays, NatWest or Midland banks, all of which offer rates higher than the best performers.

One reason for this sales anomaly may be that customers do not trust the cheap cards, and in some cases there are potential pitfalls. Though Co-operative Bank is offering a rate of just 7.9 per cent APR until March 31, it has no interest-free period, so borrowers who pay off their debts on time would be better off steering clear.

Also, traditional UK card companies can claim that certain cut-rate deals are merely ways of luring customers into paying more later. So-called "teaser" rates usually last for six months, and afterwards cardholders can be hit by a sudden rise. MBNA's benign 9.9 per cent changes into a much less favourable 18.9 per cent once the honeymoon period is over.

But MBNA's standard rate is still better than Barclaycard's, and some of the cheap deals manage to stay attractive well beyond the short term.

Though RBS Advanta's teaser 9.9 per cent APR offer ends on January 1, next year, the standard rate of 15.9 per cent is still one of the lowest on the market.

The Robert Fleming Save & Prosper Base Rate Linked card will not budge from 11.5 per cent APR until the base rate itself changes, and the People's Bank of Connecticut's 14.4 per cent is equally stable.

Splash out abroad with a clear conscience

Adam Jones says it is time to take advantage of currency gains while they last

ROS DRINKWATER

Now even the British can afford to buy the overpriced drinks in Parisian boulevard cafés

The current strength of the pound against other currencies has hurt some exporters and their investors. British Steel and ICI are among popular shares that have suffered because of sterling's rise. It's time for some payback.

An Easter holiday abroad is a fine way of exacting retribution. For once, British tourists are on the winning side of the flux in international currency markets. As you lie back on the poolside sun lounger, it will make you feel almost German (a 1980s German, not from their feel-bad 1990s).

Take France. At the end of Wednesday's currency trading, £1,000 would have got you Fr8,970 before commission, on Barclays figures. At the same time last year, you would have received Fr7,500. That's 20 per cent more, or the equivalent of an extra £200 to blow — a welcome relief to many hitherto unable to afford drinks in Parisian boulevard cafés. As France is among the countries expected to be at the core of economic and monetary union in Europe, its inflation policy is tough enough to ensure these exchange-rate gains have not been undermined by price rises. Inflation is now about 1.8 per cent.

The improvement is even more marked in Spain. Last year £1,000 would have bought 184,000 pesetas. Earlier this week it would have got 226,000 pesetas, a 23 per cent rise, or an extra £230 in your pocket. Again, increases in consumer prices will not have had much effect. Prices have been rising by less than 4 per cent in 1996. January's inflation figure was set at 2.8 per cent provisionally, as the Spanish hover on the sidelines of the first wave of European currency integration.

Germany offers a 21 per cent better deal than in 1996. Last year £1,000 would have got you DM2,210. It now gets DM2,680, a DM470 rise. Inflation has been very low, though it has been creeping up a bit recently to 1.7 per cent in January.

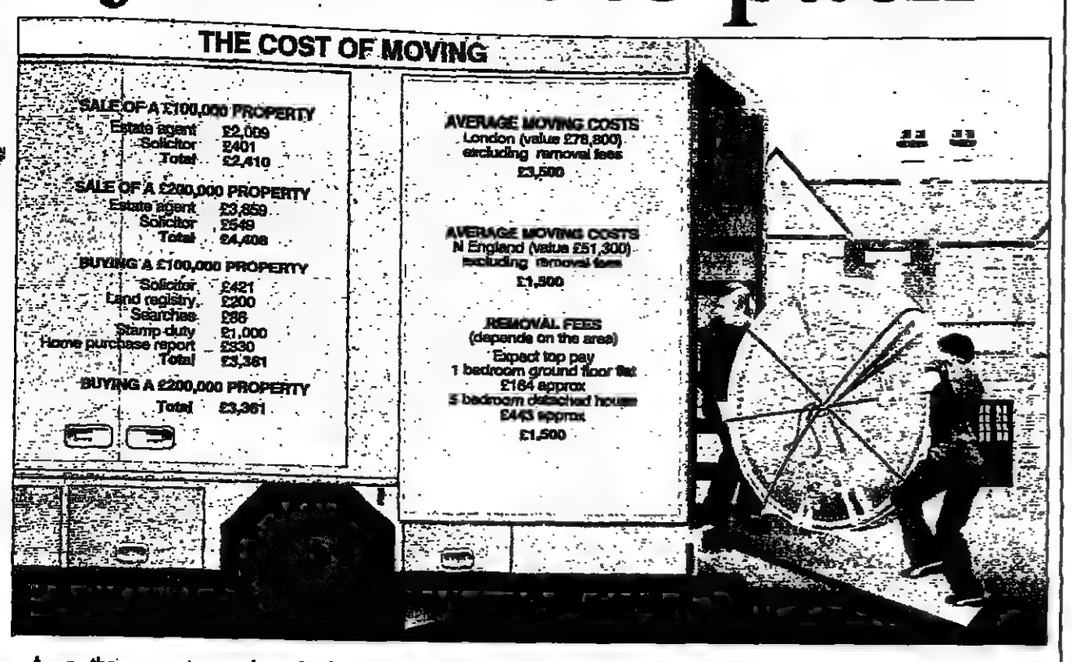
Last week £1,000 would have bought 2,677,000 Italian lire. This compares with 1,2,331,000 in the same week of 1996, a rise of 15 per cent. Price rises will have taken away some of these benefits. But although Italy is unlikely to join the single currency in 1999, it is keen to make a race of it and streamline its economy to fit the qualifying requirements. Inflation was down to 2.6 per cent, according to the latest EU figures.

The US does not look so appealing, since sterling fell from a high of $1.71 at the end of 1996. Last week you would have got $1.572 for your £1,000, only $81 over the same time last year.

You've endured a lot to beef up the pound overseas: the least you can do now is enjoy it.

Karen Zagor counts the cost of moving home

Seek quotes before you start to pack



As the property market slowly improves, those anxious to be rid of homes that have become millstones round their necks should beware the pitfalls of the buying and selling game. As one London reader of *The Times* discovered, failing to get accurate quotes from solicitors and estate agents can be a costly business.

"I was shocked when I received a solicitor's bill for £5,500," said the 75-year old, who had recently sold the flat she had lived in for years to buy a smaller one. "The sale and buying were quite straightforward. I sold my flat to the downstairs neighbour directly, so I did not have to pay estate agent's fees, but the solicitor helped to negotiate the sale. I chose a solicitor with a good address, who was recommended by a friend so I trusted him. In retrospect, I should have asked how much it would cost."

Her daughter is less stoical. "If a man had been involved, I think it might have been different. I think some lawyers look at an older woman on her own as ripe for the plucking. We met the lawyer twice, and there were some telephone calls, but the sale was quite straightforward. To justify his charges, the solicitor made his services sound very complicated. My son recently sold his flat and bought another using a local firm of solicitors, and was charged only £800."

As the reader discovered to her cost, when it comes to any business transaction, trust is not worth much on its own. While it is important to choose a reputable solicitor, and agent, it is also important to get reliable quotes. The solicitor's fee alone on the sale of a £200,000 property should not come to much more than £600, and should be much less for the sale of a cheaper property.

The good news is that the cost of moving has fallen in the past ten years. Michael Dawson, a partner in Dawson, Mason and Carr, a specialist conveyancer, said: "Costs have come down fairly dramatically over the past ten years. Solicitors are charging less than they were as a proportion of the price of the property, so are estate agents and even the Land Registry has cut its charges. The whole system is becoming more efficient."

So what should you expect to pay when you sell one property and buy another? First, there is the estate agency fee, paid by the home seller. This, on average, will cost 2 per cent of the house price for sole agency. If you take the multi-agency approach, giving the property to a number of estate agents, you can expect a fee of about 2.8 per cent. In most cases, the estate agency's fee will be the single biggest item.

If you are selling, but not buying another property, then you will only have to pay solicitor's fees on top of the estate agent's charge. But if you are buying another property, you will also face stamp duty, which runs at 1 per cent of the purchase price, plus Land Registry charges, other searches and a home purchase report. And there will be a second batch of solicitor's fees, the Land Registry and other searches.

According to the Woolwich Building Society's cost of moving survey, the sale of a £100,000 property will, on average, incur charges of £2,410, of which £2,009 will be for the estate agent and £401 will be for the solicitor. To sell a property valued at £200,000, you can expect solicitor's fees of £549, with sole agency estate agent fees of £3,859 making £4,408.

Buying is more complicated but cheaper. For a £100,000 property, you can expect £421, solicitor's fees, £200 Land Registry charges, £86 searches, £1,000 stamp duty and £330 for a home purchase report, making £2,037.

To buy a £200,000 property, expect total charges of £3,361. On average, moving costs in London are higher than elsewhere in the country. The Woolwich survey found it cost £3,500, excluding removal fees, to move to an average priced property of £78,800, against £1,500 to move to an average priced £51,300 property in the North.

Removal fees are also higher in London than elsewhere. These will vary, depending on which part of the country you live in, the size of your home, how easy the access is to your home and how far you are moving the contents. You can expect to pay about £164 to move the contents of a one-bedroom ground floor flat. Moving the contents of a five- bedroom detached house will cost about £443.

WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

First-named hold the shares of others in trust

From Mr Keith Davies and Mr William Taylor

Sir, We cannot understand what all the fuss is about concerning the question of whose name is first on a building society account.

If, as is often stated, many are the wardens of old people's homes (or similar institutions) they normally stand in a fiduciary relationship with the second-named person.

Whether that relationship is trust or an agency makes no difference to the fact that the first-named may not make a profit at the expense of the second-named.

It is quite unnecessary (though it might be seen to be politically advantageous) for a new Act of Parliament to be passed. The situation is quite clear. Although the first named may be the new recipient of the new shares, such shares are held in trust for the true owner.

Accordingly, they must be passed to that person, or held to his (or her) account if he or she is unfit to administer their own affairs.

Yours faithfully,
KEITH DAVIES
WILLIAM TAYLOR,
4 Charlton Road,
Wantage,
Oxfordshire.

More credit than is due

From Mr J.L. Evans

I was intrigued by your article (When the credit card won't do nicely, February 15) where you criticise credit-card companies setting limits on out of date income levels.

Permit me to point out that this practice also operates in the opposite direction to the one you experienced.

Like you, I have held credit cards for many years. I retired over 9 years ago, and yet credit card companies continue to review my accounts and increase my limits from time to time. In common with almost all employees, my annual income dropped significantly on retirement. Despite this the credit card companies continue as if I were still working. There seems to be no good reason for this, because without exception, I was required to give my date of birth on the original application forms.

I would suggest that there are far more people in my position than in yours.

Yours faithfully,
J. EVANS,
10 Marten Road,
Folkestone,
Kent.

Faster than the speed of light

From Mr A.R. Davies

Sir, Although the Inland Revenue's computer errors (IR may be charging a day too far, Weekend Money, March 1) are costing some people money — and what commercial sense does it make to send someone a bill for 76p —) they can work both ways. I paid the tax due on January 31 by bank giro credit on January 27 and my statement of account showed the date of receipt as January 24! Harmless, but not confidence-inspiring.

Yours faithfully,
A. DAVIES,
Sherwood,
St Nicholas Avenue,
Great Bookham,
Surrey.

Fairer deal plea over mis-selling

From Mr H. Cartwright

Sir, Legal & General offers to guarantee victims of mis-sold pensions the amount they would have received had they stayed in their company scheme as a way of cutting delays over compensation.

Surely any guarantees should be based on the projections or promises that convinced the employees to change. Does it occur to the Treasury that if employees were only offered the same as before, the chances are that they would have opted out of their employer's scheme?

Yours faithfully,
HUGH CARTWRIGHT,
22 Shrewsbury Mews,
Chepstow Road, W2.

■ Letters to Weekend Money are welcomed, but *The Times* regrets it cannot give individual replies or advice. No legal responsibility can be accepted for the advice or statements given in these columns and it must be emphasised that professional advice should always be sought over investments. Letters to Weekend Money can be faxed on 0171-782 5082.

Charity's nice little earner at Lloyds Bank

From Mr R. Breckman

Sir, After my recent letters being published concerning the inadequacies of Lloyds Bank, the computer details relating to my account now have the note: "Complains direct to chairman. Be careful".

This has made no difference, however, since they have just failed to pay a standing order. The usual apologies, corrections etc!

One consolation is that the charity to which I ask for compensation cheques to be paid is receiving a regular source of income.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT BRECKMAN,
Breckman & Company
Chartered Accountants,
49 South Molton Street, W1.

Pensions and divorce

From Mrs S. M. Bernard

Sir, I wonder how many ministers are aware that before the happy ideal of splitting pensions on divorce can be realised, a further change to the pension rules will be necessary: namely, the removal of the rule which currently forbids a non-earning spouse (usually a wife) from purchasing a personal pension.

Yours faithfully,
SUSAN BARNARD,
4 Egerton Drive,
Hale,
Altrincham,
Cheshire.

هكذا من الأصل

THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

Making the most from investment

The whole concept of investment — from Tessas to unit trusts — is explained and simplified in *Plan Your Investments Like An Expert*. The step-by-step guide shows how to develop a successful investment strategy without spending hundreds of pounds on a professional. Whether you are investing a small, weekly saving or a six-figure sum, the book shows you how to make the most of your money. Published by Foulsham on March 24, priced £6.99, it is available from bookshops or by mail order (01624 675137).

■ DELOITTE & TOUCHE, the chartered accountant, has published a selection of year-end tips for cutting your tax bill in its *Personal Tax Planner 1997*. With the general election less than two months away, it is an ideal opportunity to think about longer-term tax planning, according to the guide. Changes should be made with regard to pensions, work-related benefits, tax-efficient investments, and capital gains tax planning. For a free copy, call 0171-303 5040.

■ THE *Ernst & Young Tax Saver's Companion* has been revised and updated for 1997. Priced at £12.99, the 250-page guide includes a section on completing your tax return under the new self-assessment regime plus a year-end strategy to cutting your 1996-97 tax bill. It is published by John Wiley & Co and is available in bookshops from March 20.

■ TO HELP to avoid a big bill from the taxman, Kidsons Impey, the accountant, has published a free guide to taxation for the family company. The guide covers a variety of topics from start-up to expansion to selling in case study format and identifies the tax issues at these key stages. For a copy of *Taxation of the Family Company*, call 0171-334 4778.

■ THE latest publications from the Inland Revenue are: *Employer Compliance Reviews and Negotiations*, which looks at employers' and contractors' records and how settlements are negotiated, and *Separation, Divorce and Maintenance Payments*, which gives a detailed explanation of their treatment for tax purposes. Available free from your local tax centre.

LIZANNE ROSE

SAVERS' BEST BUYS

INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNTS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Sainsbury's Bank 0500 405060	Instnt Access	Instant	£1	5.75	Yly
Northern Rock BS 0500 505000	Select Inst	Postal	£5,000	6.35	Yly
Bristol & West BS 0800 901109	Instnt Postal	Postal	£10,000	6.40	Yly
Stroud & Swindon BS 0800 618161	Direct Inst	Postal	£50,000	6.60	Yly

NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Chelsea BS 0800 132351	POST-tel 20	20 day p	£5,000	6.05	Yly
First National BS 0800 558844	30 Day Notice	30 day p	£10,000	6.30	Yly
Northern Rock BS 0500 505000	Select 60	60 day p	£10,000	6.50	Yly
Birmingham Midshires 0500 070707	First Class 90	90 day p	£10,000	6.55	Yly

FIRST TESSAS (TAX-FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Abbey National 0800 100801	Fxd+feeder a/c	5 year	£9,000	7.50	F/Yly
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505	Fxd+feeder a/c	5 year	£8,575	7.50	F/Yly
Holmesdale BS 01737 245716		5 year	£2,500	7.00	Yly
West Bromwich BS 0990 143668		5 year	£3,000	7.00	Yly

CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS

CREDIT CARDS	Card type	Interest per month	APR%	Fee per annum
Co-operative Bank 0800 109000	Advantage Visa	0.64%NC	7.90%N	Nil
RBS Advanta 0800 077770	Visa	0.79%N	9.90%N	Nil
Capital One Bank 0800 669000	Visa	0.79%N	9.90%N	Nil

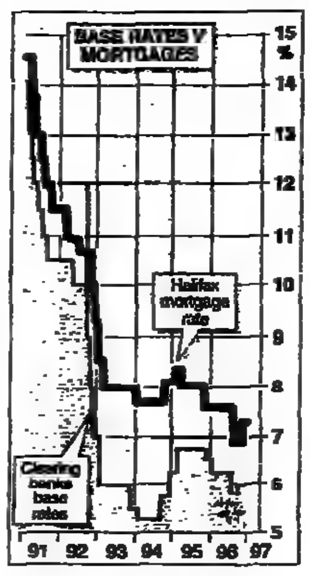
PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS

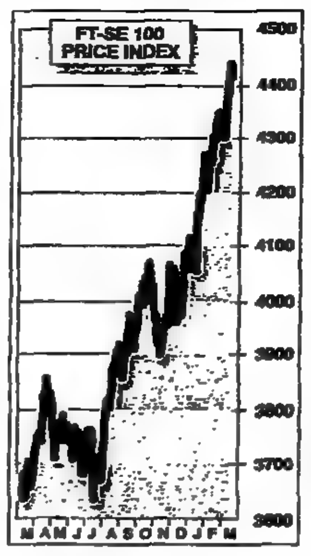
PERSONAL LOANS	APR	Monthly payment on £3,000 for 3yrs with insurance	no insurance
Northern Rock BS 0345 421421	12.90%H	£112.66	£102.59
Lombard Direct 0800 215000	13.90%A	£120.02	£101.20
RBS Direct 0800 121125	14.00%	£114.78	£101.45

NB. A = APR dependent on credit rating, C = no interest-free period, F = Fixed rate (all other rates variable), H = Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged, N = Introductory rate for a limited period, P = By post only

* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING

Source: MoneyFacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01692 500 677)





NATIONAL SAVINGS

	Gross rate	At tax rates 20%	40%	Min/maximum investment £	Notice	Contact
Ordinary A/c¹	1.50	1.20	0.90	10-10,000**		0645 645000
Investment A/c*	4.75	3.80	2.85	20-500**⁷	1mth	0645 645000
Income Bond*	6.00	4.80	3.60	2,000-25,000**	3mth	0645 645000
First Opt Bond	6.00	4.80	3.60	1,000-20,000**		0645 645000
43rd Issue Cert†	5.35			100-10,000	8day	0645 645000
Children's Bond†	6.75			25-1,000	1mth	0645 645000
Gen Ext Rate	3.51					0645 645000
Capital Bond	6.65	5.32	3.99	100-250,000	8day	0645 645000
9th Index Linked†	2.50			100-10,000	8day	0645 645000
Pensnrs Bond S3	7.00	5.60	4.20	500-50,000	60day	0645 645000

*¹ first £70 (£140 jt) of int tax free, inst accs for up to £100 * Additional hldgs up to £20,000 for reinvested proceeds †Tax free *Rates gross and vble ‡Guaranteed when held for 5 years ⁴0.2% net bonus for £20,000+ ⁵£100,000 jt in addition to S1 and S2 holdings ⁶Taxable but cred in full ⁷£500-100,000 earn higher rates **Tiered rates apply*

PENSION ANNUITIES

All figures are the gross annual annuity (£100,000 purchase), guaranteed 5 years, paid monthly in advance

SINGLE LIFE (level ann)	Male: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Canada Life ....Level	£9,647	£10,728	£12,203
Royal Sun All ....Level	£9,429	£10,573	£12,122
Sun Lf of Can........Level	£9,508	£10,557	£11,987
Sun Life ....Level	£9,421	£10,536	£12,044
Generali ....Level	£9,479	£10,523	£11,883

SINGLE LIFE	Female: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Prudential ....Level	£9,013	£9,818	£11,001
Canada Life ....Level	£8,948	£9,757	£10,943
Norwich Union ....Level	£8,838	£9,598	£10,708
Royal Sun All ....Level	£8,693	£9,543	£10,785
Sun Lf of Can........Level	£6,761	£9,510	£10,607

JOINT LIFE, 2/3 WIDOWS (level annuity)	Male: Age 60 Female: Age 55	Age 65 Age 60	Age 70 Age 65
Canada Life ....Level	£8,520	£9,140	£10,020
Prudential ....Level	£8,536	£9,068	£9,886
Stalwart * ....Level	£8,318	£9,011	£9,794
Norwich Union ....Level	£8,398	£8,968	£9,778
Sun Lf of Can........Level	£8,379	£8,962	£9,789

* Maximum purchase £100,000. Higher rates for smokers.
Source: Annuity Direct (0171-588 9393)

Figures compiled by Lizanne Rose

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

ANNUAL INCOME

Rates as at March 13, 1997

	Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year			
	5,000	AIG Life (UK)	5.25
	10,000	Pinnacle	5.40
	20,000	AIG Life (UK)	5.55
	50,000	AIG Life (UK)	5.65
2 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	4.85
	3,000	ITT Lon & Edin	5.80
	20,000	AIG Life (UK)	5.85
	50,000	AIG Life (UK)	5.90
3 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.10
	3,000	ITT Lon & Edin	6.05
4 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.55
	3,000	ITT Lon & Edin	6.35
5 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.60
	3,000	ITT Lon & Edin	6.75

Source: Chamberlain de Broë 0171-434 4322. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

PIBS

FIXED RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	% Gross yield	Issue price	Minimum purchase amount
Birmingham Midshires	9.375%	107.80	8.660	100.17	1,000
Bradford & Bingley	11.625%	132.39	8.781	100.13	10,000
Bradford & Bingley	13.000%	147.96	8.798	100.20	10,000
Bristol & West	13.375%	152.69	8.748	100.34	1,000
Britannia	13.000%	147.79	8.796	100.42	1,000
Coventry	12.125%	139.05	8.683	100.75	1,000
First National	11.750%	130.43	9.009	100.25	10,000
Halifax	8.750%	103.68	8.440	100.62	50,000
Halifax	12.000%	138.40	8.316	100.26	50,000
Halifax	13.625%	159.72	8.531	100.00	50,000
Leeds & Holbeck	13.375%	154.11	8.679	100.23	1,000
Newcastle	10.750%	124.99	8.578	100.32	1,000
Newcastle	12.625%	145.73	8.664	100.45	1,000
Northern Rock	12.625%	146.85	8.597	100.14	1,000
Skipton	12.875%	148.38	8.677	100.48	1,000

FLOATING RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	Issue price	Minimum purchase
Cheshire (28/09-27/03)	8.41563%	110.50	100.00	1,000
First Nat(20/09-20/03)	8.48750%	100.50	100.00	1,000

PIBS = Permanent interest-bearing shares
Source: ABN AMRO Hoare Govett — 0171-601 0101

LARGER LENDERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Alliance & Leic 0800 412214	4.25	to £250k	90	3% discount to 1.5.98
Woolwich 0181 2985831	4.29	£20-200k	50	3% discount for 12mth+3%cshbk
Nationwide 0800 302010	3.09	to £500k	75	3.90% discount for 12 months
Banks				
Bank of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	6.50% disc-6 mth 3% disc-6 mth
Royal Bank of Scot 0131 523 4442	4.25	£150-250k	90	3% discount to 1.10.97

LARGER LOANS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Scarborough 0800 580547	0.25	£30-100k	95	6.99% disc-6 mth 2%-6mth,0.5%-1y
Nottingham Imper. 0115 9817220	0.75	£25-150k	75	Fixed at 0.75% to 31.1.98
Hinckley & Rugby 0800 774499	1.25	£1-150k	80	8% discount for 12 months
Banks				
Bank of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	8.50% disc-6 mth 3% dec-6 mth
Midland Bank 0800 494999	4.15	£50-100k	95	3% discount for 1 year

FIRST-TIME BUYERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Bristol & West 0800 119955	3.50	£15k+	95	3.75% discount for 12 months
Newbury 01635 43676	3.99	£15-150k	95	3% discount for 12 months
Woolwich 0181 298 5831	5.29	£20-200k	95	2% discount for 12 months
Banks				
Bnk of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	6.50% disc 6 mths 3% disc 6 mths
TSB Bank 0500 758000	3.51	£15k+	95	3.74% disc for 12 months

Larger lenders, loans and first-time buyers tables by Blay's Guides Ltd. (01753 880482).

UNIT-LINKED INSURANCE INVESTMENTS

	Bid	Offer	Wkly +/-	Yld %
AEGON LIFE ASSURANCE Edinburgh Park, Edinburgh, EH12 9SE 0131 339 9191				
Balanced	744.80	778.40	- 1.70	...
UK Equity	734.40	777.20	- 1.60	...
Property	428.20	451.20	+ 0.50	...
Fixed Interest	768.90	790.40	+ 0.70	...
Money	272.30	288.20	+ 0.30	...
International	427.30	452.20	- 5.30	...
ABBEY LIFE Holdenhurst Road, Bournemouth BH8 8AL 01202 292373				
Custodian S4	199.70	210.30	- 0.10	...
Ethical S4	175.20	184.50	+ 1.60	...
International S4	223.30	235.30	- 0.40	...
Protected Gth S4	125.60	132.30	+ 0.10	...
Asian Pacific	216.70	227.50	- 2.70	...
European S4	231.60	243.80	- 1.20	...
Prop Fd Ser 4	405.20	426.60	+ 0.40	...
Equity Ser 4	[illegible]	304.40	- 0.20	...
Man Ser 4	812.70	855.50	- 2.00	...
Conv Ser 4	357.60	376.30	+ 0.20	...
Money Ser 4	357.20	376.10	+ 0.20	...
Fixed Int Ser 4	405.90	427.30	- 0.40	...
American Ser 4	712.00	749.50	- 6.10	...
High Inc Ser 4	880.60	927.00	+ 0.90	...
Indexed Inv Ser 4	233.30	245.80	- 1.10	...
Japan Ser 4	273.00	287.40	- 5.80	...
ALBANY LIFE 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar EN6 1AJ 01707 42311				
Equity Fd Acc	2072.10	2181.10	- 8.70	...
European Fd Acc	514.00	541.00	- 0.10	...
Fixed Int Acc	581.80	612.40	- 0.20	...
Gtd Money Acc	364.00	383.10	+ 0.20	...
Intl Managed Acc	760.10	800.10	- 2.90	...
Int Fxd Int Acc	376.60	396.30	+ 1.50	...
Japan Fund	214.10	225.40	- 5.00	...
N American Acc	454.90	478.70	- 3.60	...
Prop Fd Acc	482.70	508.00	+ 0.80	...
Multiple Inv Acc	1286.30	1352.90	- 3.80	...
ALLIED DUNBAR ASSURANCE Swindon SN1 1EL 01793 514514				
Fxd Int Dep Acc	408.50	430.10	+ 0.40	...
Equity Acc	1812.70	1908.20	- 9.10	...
Property Acc	672.20	707.60	+ 0.90	...
Far East Acc	325.20	342.40	- 4.50	...
Managed Capital	637.40	671.00	- 2.70	...
[illegible]				

	Bid	Offer	Wkly +/-	Yld %
UK Opportunity	272.10	287.80	+ 0.80	...
Euro Opportunity	287.80	304.50	- 3.70	...
North Amer Opp	261.30	276.50	+ 0.50	...
Far East Opp	206.20	218.20	- 1.60	...
Gwth Prop Ser 1	176.40	186.20	...	...
Gth Prop Ser 2	212.80	226.20	+ 0.30	...
Fixed Int	228.00	240.60	- 0.30	...
Cash	172.60	182.50	+ 0.10	6.49
Overseas	279.50	296.20	- 0.30	...
Formerly LAS				
Managed Fund	439.50	462.70	- 0.30	...
UK Equity	823.00	866.40	+ 2.60	...
Property	295.10	310.70	+ 0.50	...
Money Market	273.50	287.90	+ 0.20	...
Fixed Interest	341.40	359.40	- 0.40	...
Japan	283.80	298.80	- 4.50	...
North American	232.50	244.80	+ 0.40	...
International	432.90	455.30	- 0.30	...
European	368.10	387.50	- 7.20	...
Far East	152.70	160.80	- 1.30	...
CANADA LIFE 2-6 High Street, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 5BA 01707 51122				
Managed	415.70	437.60	+ 0.30	...
Property	280.20	294.90	+ 0.70	...
Gilt & Fxd Int	278.00	292.70	- 0.20	...
Equity	505.40	532.00	+ 0.10	...
Cash	232.80	245.10	+ 0.10	...
C Life Euro Mgd	489.20	515.10	+ 2.40	...
C Life Intl Fd	393.20	413.90	+ 0.70	...
Managed Fund	887.40	934.10	+ 0.90	...
Property Fund	566.60	596.40	+ 0.70	...
Equity Fund	1247.10	1312.70	+ 0.10	...
Gilt Edged Fd	717.30	755.00	- 0.70	...
Deposit Fund	361.20	380.20	...	...
Investment Fd	551.10	578.70	+ 0.40	...
International	625.60	658.70	+ 1.10	...
CITY OF WESTMINSTER ASSURANCE Sentry House, 500 Avebury Blvd, Milton Keynes MK9 2NU. 01908 606101				
Property Fund	172.40	182.00	...	...
Managed Fund	798.60	840.70	+ 1.00	...
Equity Fund	481.10	506.50	+ 0.90	...
CLERICAL MEDICAL/FIDELITY INVESTMENTS Narrow Plain, Bristol BS2 0JH. 0117 9290566				
Assurance Funds				
Sapphire Mixed	356.00	374.80	- 3.70	...
Ruby	206.60	217.50	- 2.70	...
Emerald	162.70	171.30	...	...
[illegible]				

[illegible]

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

For AIB see Govett (John)

AXA EQUITY & LAW UNIT TST MGRS
01203 553 231

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
General Acc	731.60	778.30	- 3.20	2.31
General Inc	[illegible]	[illegible]	- 7.40	2.31
UK Growth Acc	507.70	540.20	- 2.40	2.42
UK Growth Inc	[illegible]	[illegible]	- 1.50	2.42
Higher Inc Acc	908.40	966.40	- 0.80	3.86
Higher Inc Inc	483.90	514.80	- 0.50	3.86
Gilts/Fxd Int Acc	217.00	229.10	+ 0.20	5.46
Gilts/Fxd Int Inc	92.73	97.94	+ 0.10	5.46
Nth America	[illegible]	[illegible]	- 1.30	
Europe	400.30	425.80	- 0.50	0.95
Brit Excel	[illegible]	[illegible]	- 0.50	2.54
Brit Fndmtls Acc	128.00	136.20	+ 0.30	4.53
Brit Fndmtls Inc	84.37	89.76	- 1.17	4.53
Global Opps	105.70	112.50	- 1.10	
Balanced Acc	67.22	71.52	- 0.32	2.42
Balanced Inc	62.77	66.78	- 0.30	2.42
Japan Acc	37.12	39.49	- 0.81	..
Pac Basin Acc	400.50	426.10	-11.00	0.95

ABBEY UNIT TST MGRS
0345 717 373

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Gilts & Fixed Int	133.20	141.30†	- 0.10	6.73
High Inc Equity	199.90	213.80		4.44
Worldwide Bond	270.60	288.60†	+ 0.70	4.19
American Growth	432.10	461.90	- 4.50	0.36
Asian Pacific	338.90	360.30	- 4.80	0.38
Assets & Earnings	330.10	353.00	+ 2.30	2.67
Euro Capital Acc	206.38	220.60	- 1.60	0.72
Extra Inc	43.15	45.90†	+ 0.02	7.97
General	295.30	[illegible]	- 1.40	2.88
Global Opps	75.39	80.20	- 0.77	0.50
Japan	87.49	93.57	- 2.06	
Managed Inc	49.94	53.13†	0.03	4.23
Masterfund	178.10	190.50	- 0.30	1.26
US Emerging Cos	189.10	201.20	- 3.60	
Ethical	90.56	96.34	+ 1.06	1.63
International	141.30	150.30	- 1.10	0.58
Dividend & Growth	73.70	78.40	+ 0.02	4.29
Global Gwth & Sec	74.96	[illegible]	- 0.06	2.52
Latin America	82.78	88.06	+ 1.23	0.44
Capital Reserve	148.00	148.10	- 0.20	4.60

ABBEY NATIONAL UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD
0141 275 8500

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
N&P UK Growth	98.52	104.80	- 0.60	2.30
Equity Income	138.90	147.70	- 0.20	4.08
Extra Income	268.00	285.10	- 0.80	6.30
Smaller Cos	116.00	123.40†	- 0.10	1.45
International	118.60	126.10	- 0.90	1.35

ABERFORTH UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD
0131 220 0733

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Pacific Portfolio	167.15	179.74	- 0.35	0.79
UK Equity	106.11	113.90	- 0.36	3.11
UK Equity & Inc	61.92	65.63	- 0.07	6.08
UK Smlr Cos	56.27	60.19†	+ 0.13	1.56

CBF CHURCH OF ENGLAND FUNDS
0171 588 1815

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Inv Fund	838.86	851.54	+15.08	4.04
Fxd In Sec	158.40	159.04	- 3.55	8.99

COIF CHARITY FUNDS
0171 588 1815

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Investment Inc	832.43	845.01	+22.73	4.07
Investment Acc	[illegible]	[illegible]	+110.50	
Fixed Int Inc	130.70	131.22	+ 0.20	8.84
Fixed Int Acc	243.43	244.41	+ 0.35	.

CITY FINANCIAL UT MGRS LTD
0171 407 5966

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Beckman Intl	88.24	94.06	+ 0.31	5.33
[illegible]	45.36	49.29	- 1.34	.
Acorn Ethical Tst	192.92	202.58	- 1.32	0.42
City Fin Accum	85.19	89.46	+ 1.74	1.72
City Fin Intl	92.80	97.45	+ 1.30	0.13
Friars Hse Cap	331.02	352.15	+ 3.64	2.26
Buckley Yield Grth	145.00	153.70†	+ 1.83	..
[illegible]	61.67	64.76	+ 0.48	3.21
Stew Utilities	66.35	67.96	- 0.49	8.53

CITY OF LONDON UNIT TST MGRS LTD
0171 711 0771 Admin: 01277 227 300

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Emerging Markets	60.74	64.45†	+ 0.50	

CLERICAL MEDICAL UT MGRS LTD
0345 772 233

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
American Gwth	83.58	88.91	- 1.70	
Dragon Growth	73.06	78.13	- 2.16	0.37
Equity High Inc	99.32	106.41†	- 0.33	3.60
-do- Accum	145.60	156.00	- 0.48	3.60
Extra Income Inc	27.33	28.78	- 0.06	6.95
Extra Income Acc	30.51	32.12	- 0.07	6.95
European Gwth	68.68	72.97	- 0.48	0.41
Evergreen	32.19	34.42	- 0.22	.
General Equity	115.74	122.80	- 0.93	2.57
Japan Growth	36.93	39.29	- 1.18	
Pedigree Gwth	69.62	74.53	- 0.27	2.05
Pad Stn Cos Inc	41.42	44.54	+ 0.09	1.01
-do- Accum	44.16	47.48	+ 0.08	1.01
[illegible]	30.27	32.24	- 0.13	6.55
Special Sits	51.00	54.84	- 0.49	2.51
UK [illegible]	63.65	67.53	- 0.61	0.69

COLONIAL UNIT TRUSTS (UK) LTD
01634 898 000

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Balanced	75.12	78.24†	+ 0.11	3.86
Capital	90.54	94.31†	- 0.34	2.43

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Sector Value Inc #	114.40	120.70	- 0.50	3.38
Sector Value Gwth	116.50	122.90	- 0.80	1.72
Hy 5 Europe	110.50	116.10	- 0.50	1.92
Sister Gwth	207.80	221.60	- 1.90	0.91
New Japan	77.55	81.45	- 2.16	..

JUPITER UT MGRS LTD
0171 581 3020

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
World Health	218.90	230.50	- 2.80	
Income #	246.29	261.94	- 0.19	3.86
UK Growth	95.96	102.96		1.81
Intl Growth	92.05	97.87†	- 0.56	0.57
Ecology	113.08	120.24	- 0.42	0.49
European	232.105	246.92	- 0.87	0.30
Far Eastern	[illegible]	332.40	- 6.20	.
UK Special Sits	61.24	65.32	+ 0.43	0.37
Fd of Inv Tsts	87.00	92.79	+ 0.16	.
High Income #	56.60	59.61	- 0.04	4.71

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
-do- Accum	204.10	218.00	- 0.80	4.97

MGM UNIT MANAGERS LTD
Dealing: 01277 281 010 Enq: 01903 204 631

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
European Growth	110.24	117.27	- 1.45	0.39
Intl Bond	63.91	67.13	+ 0.40	4.70
Intl Equity Growth	88.58	94.18	- 0.99	0.58
N Amer Growth	152.72	162.27†	- 0.38	0.75
Special Sits Growth	30.81	32.88†	- 0.04	1.98
UK Growth	507.84	540.04	- 0.78	2.41
-do- Accum	701.00	745.74	- 1.08	2.41

MW JOINT INVESTORS LTD
01528 825887

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Balanced Fd #	1525.40	1548.20	+ 8.10	2.20
Income #	1092.80	1109.20	+10.60	4.50

KLEINWORT BENSON UNIT TRUSTS
Dealers: 0171 956 7384

Income Trusts

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
[illegible]	102.50	105.90†	- 0.30	6.88
Euro Pfl Inc	112.70	119.90	+ 0.40	2.75
-do- Accum	112.70	119.90	+ 0.40	2.75
Gilt Yield	120.40	127.10†	- 0.20	6.38
Global Income	246.80	262.60†	+ 0.20	3.04
High Yield	174.10	186.20	- 0.50	5.04
-do- Accum	581.60	618.70	- 1.70	5.04
Money Market	99.09	99.08†	+ 0.10	5.40

MALDON UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD
0121 232 4342

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Maldon General	180.20	187.20	+ 1.40	3.31

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST LTD
0800 363432

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
M & S Inv Ptfio	190.40	196.30	- 0.70	2.32
-do- Accum	229.20	235.30	- 0.80	2.32
UK Sel Ptflo	172.10	177.90	- 0.30	2.32
-do- Accum	209.60	218.10	- 0.40	2.32
[illegible]	139.20	139.20†	- 0.50	2.42
-do- Accum	132.40	132.40†	- 0.50	2.42

Equities reverse early falls

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
558	407½	Allied Domecq	461	+ 17½	6.4	13.9
626	477	Bulmer (HP)	626		2.7	18.6
[illegible]	[illegible]	Burn Stewart	70½		6.0	74.9
1025	615	Glenmorangie A	1015		1.5	27.6
496	[illegible]	Grand Met	491½	+ 9½	4.0	15.5
493	424	Guinness	487½	+ 14	3.9	15.1
380	315	Highland Dist	370	− 1	2.6	17.8
803	255½	Matthew Clark	322		9.3	15.4
[illegible]	91½	Merrydown W	100½		5.7	13.6
2612½	1375	SA Breweries	1921½	− 25	[illegible]	

BANKS

1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
4706¾	2743¾	ABN-AMRO	4334¾	− 68¾	2.7	17.5
811	538	Abbey Natl	784	+ 5	4.2	13.9
455½	315	Allied Irish	436½		4.2	.
408½	285	Aus New Z	383½	− 2	4.9	.
7670¾	3843¾	Bank America	7137½	− 201¼		
373½	227½	Bank Scotland	349	− 2	2.6	12.8
1226	683	Barclays	1108½	− 11	3.6	11.2
635	413	Bk of Ireland	626½	− 3	3.3	14.2
7880¾	4031¼	Citicorp	7325	− 363½	...	
1700	1268¾	Commerzbk	1668¾	− 43¾	2.7	
1350	609¾	Dai Ichi Kan Y	681¼	− 9½	0.6	
3430¾	2709½	Deutsche Bk	3368¾	− 18¾	2.0	...
909¾	593¾	Espirito Santo	906¼	− 2¼	3.8	12.6
1507	600½	Fuji Bank Y	702½	− 7½	0.6	
1622	931	HSBC	1584	+ 7	3.3	13.5
1563½	930	HSBC HK	1531	+ 11	3.4	13.0
600	395	Irish Perm	585	− 5	3.7	
534	294½	Lloyds TSB	522½	+ 4	3.2	16.9
818½	566	Nat Aust Bk	793	− 3¼	5.4	10.3
844½	605½	Nat West	795½	− 3½	4.9	11.0
632½	464	Ryl Bk Scot	565½	− 10	4.2	12.3
900½	547	Stand Chart	846½	− 3½	2.1	15.7
£174¼	£131¾	Wells Fargo	£164¾		2.0	..
374¾	264	Westpac	350¾	− 4	4.0	10.9

1996/97 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
467½	328	Electrocomponents	424	− 2½	2.1	25.7
314	125½	Eurodis Elect	290	− 7½	3.1	28.5
156	65	Eurotherm	136½	− ½	5.5	13.9
105	76	European Mtr	82½	− 5½	8.0	8.4
375	217	Evans Halshaw	252½	− 5	8.2	9.9
67	39½	Fife Indmar	50½		8.2	7.6
397½	239½	Frost Grp A	[illegible]	− 6	2.1	18.2
34½	15½	Gardiner	33½		3.5	12.8
97	33½	Glenchewton	71	− 4½	2.4	
[illegible]	70½	Gowrings	[illegible]		3.3	17.6
101	72	Hamlet	91½	...	8.2	8.5
[illegible]	216	Harris (Philip)	258		4.2	15.8
320	200½	Headlam	320		2.3	26.5
200	132	Holders Tech	149		5.0	14.0
242½	153	ISA Intl	225		1.6	
[illegible]	231	Inchcape	260	+ 3½	3.9	22.7
78	33	Jacks (Wm)	52½	...	4.8	18.1
260	169	Kwik-Fit	240	− 2	2.7	19.9
380	299	Lex Service	330	− 1½	6.1	10.9
155	105	Lookers	108½		9.3	6.9
[illegible]	10½	Malcom Grp	13½	− ¼	6.1	
8¼	5½	Middlesex	7½		1.3	11.4
[illegible]	31	Midstates	39		0.8	
565	[illegible]	[illegible]	380	− 24	3.8	7.2
174½	115	Northamber	158½	− 5½	1.1	9.9
370½	201½	Parkes	350		3.0	
404½	272	Pendragon	393½	− 1	3.2	.
222½	145	Perry Gp	222¼	− 1	5.2	.
752½	480	Premier Farnell	512½	− 2	2.8	19.9
190	135	Quicks Group	145½	− 1	5.6	10.9
349	185	RBA	[illegible]		1.5	38.8
3	2	Reece	2½			
54	30	Ronson	23	.	8.2	7.9
4½	2	Ross Gp	3	.		
109½	66	Rylands	88½	.	5.7	15.9
56	25½	SEP Indl	[illegible]		7.6	7.7
195	55	Calibre	61	+ 1½	2.6	[illegible]
417½	246	Tace Products	415	.	3.3	17.0
301½	123	UMECO	233	− 4½	2.8	16.7
382½	263½	Vardy (Reg)	335½	.	2.6	14.6
650	325	WF Electr	612		2.7	22.2
59	25½	Walshaw	38	− ½	2.8	11.2
172½	75½	Wyko	158½	..	2.1	18.5
154½	104	Young (H)	142½	.	3.7	12.3

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RACING: IMPROVING STAYER CAN UNDERMINE LORD GYLLENE'S GRAND NATIONAL CLAIMS

Seven Towers has pedigree for success

By Julian Muscat

BOOKMAKERS might be wise to beware the stayer on home soil. Two days after Karshi annexed the long-distance hurdling championship in the livery of Lord Vestey, the chairman at Cheltenham, Lord Gyllene — owned by Uttoxeter's proprietor, Stan Clarke — attempts a similar mission in the Marstons Pedigree Midlands Grand National (1.50).

Punters are often tempted by such circumstances, but they should also consider the mantle inherited by Lord Gyllene in respect of the Grand National itself. Lo Stregone was the favourite until failing at Haydock last month. He was immediately usurped by Coome Hill, who promptly fluffed his lines in the Gold Cup. The poisoned chalice has now been passed to Lord Gyllene.

If the nine-year-old is well suited to this venue, he has never conceded weight to opponents of this calibre. True, his defeat of Mudahim over the course and distance looked attractive when the runner-up subsequently prevailed at Kempton, but Mudahim has since run badly at Cheltenham. Highly weighted as he is, Lord Gyllene makes little appeal at the likely odds and **Seven Towers** can dent his Aintree aspirations.

Seven Towers has landed seven of ten starts, but his progress had been hesitant until connections sent him over marathon distances this term. He just gets better and better, as was evident by his decisive victory over an extended four miles most recently. Killeshin, beaten eight lengths into third, is allowed 8lb this time. Those who witnessed the Newcastle contest will expect a similar outcome.

The thought of McGregor The Third confronting Aintree's fences is something to savour. The events of Cheltenham have all but ensured a huge rise in the National weights — much to the benefit of McGregor The Third, allotted just 8st 12lb. Jumping is his forte but he will not be seen to maximum advantage over Uttoxeter's undemanding fences.

Musthaveaswig is admirable but prone to frustrating jumping lapses, while Sister Stephanie, another with much to gain from an Aintree eights rise, would be more comfortable on softer ground. That leaves Tony McCoy's mount, Act The Wag, as the biggest threat. The eight-year-old's more polished fencing has allowed his talent to blossom this season. He may also improve over this longer trip in search of a fourth successive victory, but Seven Towers can take his measure.

The Scottish Equitable Jockeys' Association Series Final Handicap Hurdle (1.15) is a tightly knit affair in which **Edgemoor Prince** deserves respect after a game victory at Warwick most recently. The first two finished 20 lengths clear of nine others and Edgemoor Prince is almost certainly on the upgrade.

Although Sail By The Stars prevailed comfortably on her recent chasing debut, her inexperience is not encouraging in the European Breeders' Fund Tattersalls (Ireland) Mares' Novices' Chase Handicap Final (12.45). Should the Channel 4 commentator refer in running to its full title, the contest will be well into its closing stages. There may just be sufficient time to call **Tellicherry** home ahead of her ten opponents.

The concluding televised heat, the Bet With The Tote Novices' Handicap Chase Final (2.25), can go to **Kamikaze**.

JULIAN HERBERT

Act The Wag is a leading contender for the Midlands Grand National at Uttoxeter today

The Artful Rascal seeks prestige win

POINT-TO-POINT
BY CARL EVANS

THE first of seven "prestige" races, worth £500, double the usual maximum, takes place at the **West Street-Tickham** meeting tomorrow.

It is the first time since 1990 that any increase has been allowed, and the cost of training horses has risen sharply in that time, particularly now many yards maintain or pay to use all-weather gallops. It was felt that some long-established "classic" races were losing kudos to hunter chases and sponsored championships, hence the prestige-race increase.

Tomorrow's event, a four-mile men's open, has attracted 29 entries, only two more than last year, but the test of popularity will be in the declared runners. The Artful Rascal, a progressive horse who travels from Suffolk, is likely to start favourite.

The best horse in action this weekend is The Bounder, who tackles the men's open at the **Quantock Staghounds** fixture. He beat Fantus at Didmarton and events at Cheltenham suggest The Bounder is on his way to the top.

Bengers Moor is another exciting talent on a nine-race card, and credit must go to the owners of the Cothelstone track, who were criticised last year over the ground conditions. They ploughed up the track and began afresh and have been rewarded by some good entries.

Julian Pritchard is in form, his four winners last Saturday having since been topped up by two hunter chase successes. Pritchard rides the Nicky Sheppard-trained Prideaux Prince at the **New Forest Buckhounds** meeting but will find the Jamie Jukes-ridden King Torus hard to beat.

TODAY'S MEETINGS: Dunston Harriers at Ampton, 4m N of Bury St Edmunds (first race 1.00); Holderness at Dalton Park, 5m N of Beverley (1.30); N Forest Buck at Larkhill, 5m NW of Amesbury (12.30); Quantock Stag at Cothelstone, 2m NE of Bishops Lydeard (12.30); Western at Wadebridge, 1m W of town (12.00)

TOMORROW: Carmarthenshire at Erw Lon, 10m N of Carmarthen (12.30); Cottesmore at Garthorpe, 6m E of Melton Mowbray (12.30); Dart Vale & Haldon at Bishops Court, 1m S of Ottery St Mary (1.00); Eglinton at Lanark, 3m S of town (1.00); Ross Harriers at Garnons, 8m W of Hereford (1.00); West Street-Tickham at Detling, 2m NE of Maidstone (1.15)

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Folkestone

Going: good, good to soft in places

2.00 (2m 1f 110yd hdle) 1, Flash In The Pan (W McFarland, 11-2); 2, Laura Lye (6-1); 3, Pedaltothemetal (9-4 fav). 11 ran. 6l, 7l. J Moore. Tote: £7.20; £2.30, £1.70, £1.10. DF: £24.80. Trio: £26.00. CSF: £34.06.

2.30 (3m 2f ch) 1, Flippance (C Llewellyn, 6-1); 2, High Learie (9-4); 3, Bond Jnr (100-30). Sir Leonard 13-8 fav (pu). 7 ran. 6l, 16l. N Gaselee. Tote: £5.10; £2.20, £1.60. DF: £5.20. CSF: £18.10.

3.00 (2m 1f 110yd hdle) 1, Sharpical (M A Fitzgerald, 1-12 fav); 2, Fire On Ice (14-1); 3, Leap Frog (14-1). 8 ran. NR: Smart Remark. 3l, nk. N Henderson. Tote: £1.20; £1.00, £2.40, £2.70. DF: £2.80. Trio: £4.40. CSF: £2.28.

3.30 (2m ch) 1, The Carrot Man (P Hide, 7-4 fav); 2, Coolteen Hero (3-1); 3, Lasata (13-2). 4 ran. NR: Pharsilk. 24l, dist. P Winkworth. Tote: £2.40. DF: £3.30. CSF: £6.48.

4.00 (2m 1f 110yd hdle) 1, Caracol (T Dascombe, 8-1); 2, Mullintor (8-1); 3, Swinging Sixties (7-2). Mirage Of Windsor 3-1 fav (pu). 12 ran. 3l, 3½l. J Neville. Tote: £8.70; £2.30, £2.60, £2.30. DF: £25.00. Trio: £41.80. CSF: £58.16. Tricast: £189.64. No bid.

4.30 (3m 2f ch) 1, Royal Saxon (R Johnson, 5-1); 2, Shamarphil (13-2); 3, Yeoman Warrior (11-2). Sugar Hill 6-2 fav (pu). 10 ran. NR: Cruise Control. 2½l, ¾l. P Bowen. Tote: £8.00; £2.60, £1.90, £2.40. DF: £14.40. Trio: £36.20. CSF: £38.73. Tricast: £167.32.

5.00 (2m 1f 110yd flat race) 1, Sunday Venture (M A Fitzgerald, 15-8 fav); 2, Shebang (4-1); 3, Silver Sirocco (14-1). 16 ran. ¾l, 3½l. N Henderson. Tote: £2.70; £1.20, £1.80, £6.80. DF: £5.40. Trio: £65.00. CSF: £9.41.

Jackpot: £11,083.80.

Placepot: £58.00. Quadpot: £11.70.

Fakenham

Going: good

2.10 (2m hdle) 1, Antiguan Flyer (Michael Brennan, 20-1); 2, General Shirley (8-1); 3, Arch Angel (7-1). Ruth's Gamble 3-1 fav. 12 ran. 11l, 2l. G Prodromou. Tote: £33.50; £7.70, £2.40, £1.80. DF: £187.50. Trio: £240.40. CSF: £168.61. Tricast: £1,153.53.

2.40 (2m 5f 110yd ch) 1, What Chance (Mr A Charles-Jones, 7-2); 2, Galzig (12-1); 3, Gypsy King (5-1). Aries 11-10 fav. 10 ran. NR: Broad Steane. 3½l, 2l. Mrs H Mobley. Tote: £4.50; £1.40, £4.00, £1.70. DF: £24.50. Trio: £39.30. CSF: £40.25.

3.10 (2m 5f 110yd ch) 1, Pats Minstrel (A Dobbin, 9-1); 2, Artic Wings (9-4); 3, Whappers Delight (100-30). Hawaiian Youth Evens fav. 5 ran. 2l, 20l. R Champion. Tote: £8.60; £3.70, £1.50. DF: £12.00. CSF: £28.73.

3.40 (2m hdle) 1, Barford Sovereign (A Dobbin, 3-1); 2, Finlaw (6-4 fav); 3, Ajdar (8-1). 6 ran. NR: Irish Emerald. Hd, 16l. J Fanshawe. Tote: £4.80; £1.70, £1.10, £1.70. DF: £4.80. Trio: £5.70. CSF: £7.85. Tricast: £29.50.

4.10 (3m 110yd ch) 1, Brogeen Lady (P Niven, 6-4 fav); 2, Jolly Boat (4-1); 3, Charter Lane (12-1). 8 ran. 2½l, 18l. D Gandolfo. Tote: £3.30; £1.80, £2.20, £2.60. DF: £8.50. CSF: £8.02.

4.40 (2m hdle) 1, Florid (M Berry, 3-1); 2, Taarish (9-2); 3, Formidable Partner (9-4 fav). 7 ran. NR: O K Kealy. 22l, ¾l. C Brooks. Tote: £3.80; £2.10, £1.80. DF: £8.60. CSF: £16.84.

5.10 (2m hdle) 1, Muhandam (P Henley, 6-1); 2, Wentworth (2-1); 3, Air Commodore (5-4 fav). 8 ran. 6l, 3l. Mrs D Haine. Tote: £7.60; £3.10, £1.00, £1.50. DF: £10.30. CSF: £18.36.

Placepot: £261.00. Quadpot: £18.10.

Southwell

Going: standard

2.20 (1m 4f) 1, Moonraking (G Parkin, 9-1); 2, Yilnamarlyna Girl (7-1); 3, Dirab (7-1); 4, Hasta La Vista (8-1). Wildfire 5-1 fav. 16 ran. NR: Mr Speculator. 1l, nk. T Etherington. Tote: £17.90; £3.50, £2.40, £3.10, £2.80. DF: £90.00. Trio: £334.20 (part won; pool of £65.91 carried forward to 5.30 at Hereford today). CSF: £68.82. Tricast: £450.94.

2.50 (1m) 1, Soldier Cove (D Sweeney, 3-1); 2, First Gold (20-1); 3, Live Project (9-4 fav). 10 ran. 2½l, 2½l. M Meade. Tote: £5.80; £2.10, £3.00, £1.30. DF: £37.50. Trio: £15.10. CSF: £63.87.

3.20 (6f) 1, Bonyalua Mill (R Havlin, 20-1); 2, Barwell Boy (8-1); 3, Impish (33-1). Saratoga Red 4-5 fav. 9 ran. 1½l, 1½l. A Streeter. Tote: £54.20; £9.10, £1.20, £7.80. DF: £98.70. Trio: £170.80 (part won; pool of £125.11 carried forward to 5.30 at Hereford today). CSF: £177.05.

3.50 (6f) 1, Double-O (K Fallon, 5-1); 2, The Wyandotte Inn (4-1); 3, V I P Charlie (4-5 fav). 4 ran. 6l, 1½l. W Jarvis. Tote: £4.90. DF: £5.30. CSF: £20.58.

4.20 (1m) 1, Mirror Four Sport (K Sked, 10-1); 2, Aspecto Lad (11-4); 3, Marchew (2-1 fav). 7 ran. 3l, 4l. M Johnston. Tote: £11.90; £4.20, £1.90. DF: £23.80. CSF: £37.07.

4.50 (1m) 1, Square Deal (S Webster, 12-1); 2, Major Mouse (8-1); 3, Desert Invader (100-30). Northern Fan 3-1 fav. 9 ran. NR: Roar On Tour. 1¼l, 1¼l. S Bowring. Tote: £14.00; £4.00, £1.80, £1.50. DF: £34.10. Trio: £129.10. CSF: £101.10.

5.20 (7f) 1, Genuine John (J Bramhill, 11-8 fav); 2, Evening In Paris (4-1); 3, Will Do (5-1). 6 ran. 1½l, 1¼l. J Parkes. Tote: £2.20; £2.60, £4.00. DF: £4.60. CSF: £7.02.

Placepot: £4,787.10. Quadpot: £609.20.

HEREFORD

THUNDERER

2.20 Proud Image. 2.55 Scottish Bambi. 3.25 Added Dimension. 4.00 Prince Of Verona. 4.30 Precious Island. 5.00 Northern Singer. 5.30 Professor Page.

Carl Evans: 4.00 Chip'N'Run.

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO FIRM IN PLACES) SIS

2.20 MARCH NOVICES SELLING HURDLE (£2,122: 2m 1f) (16 runners)

1	3132	PROUD IMAGE 21 (BF,F) G McCourt 5-11-7	J Osborne
2		BOOT JACK P Rich 6-11-1	W Marston
3	04/	CORPORATE IMAGE 1129 T Hind 7-11-1	P McLoughlin
4	PRP0	ERNEST ARAGORN 32 (V) Mrs S Lamyman 6-11-1	Derek Byrne
5	6F	ESPLA 32 J Moore 6-11-1	W McFarland
6	-000	HANGING GROVE 9 P Murphy 7-11-1	Sophie Mitchell (3)
7	P00-	KARIBU 357 (GER) J Bennett 6-11-1	L Harvey
8	0P	NOOUITA 88 J McConnochie 10-11-1	X Aizpuru (7)
9	0623	SHARP THRILL 35F B Smart 6-11-1	C Llewellyn
10	36-5	SLANEY RASHER 282 B Llewellyn 10-11-1	Mr J L Llewellyn
11	/PU-	VITAL WONDER 308P J Parfitt 9-11-1	M Griffiths (7)
12	PP	A BADGE TOO FAR 16 Mrs L Williamson 7-10-10	R Bellamy
13		AMANY 549F D Burchell 5-10-10	D J Burchell
14	5-00	VITA NUOVA 10 W Jenks 6-10-10	V Slattery
15	4F	EL BARDADOR 10 R Hodges 4-10-7	T Dascombe (3)
16	0000	STILL HERE 5 (B) P Bowen 4-10-7	Mr R Thornton (5)

5-2 Proud Image, 6-1 Amany, 7-1 Sharp Thrill, 8-1 Slaney Rasher, Still Here, El Bardador, 12-1 others.

2.55 NEWENT HANDICAP CHASE (£3,388: 2m) (5)

1	2P13	SCOTTISH BAMBI 7 (CD,BF,F,G,S) P Webber 9-11-10	J Osborne
2	P-P5	MONDAY CLUB 105 (CD,F,G,S) J Tuck 13-11-8	R Bellamy
3	3366	NORTHERN OPTIMIST 115 (D,BF,F,G) B Llewellyn 9-10-1	Mr R Thornton (5)
4	315/	CORPUS 866 (D,F) R Hodges 8-10-0	T Dascombe (3)
5	5201	DR ROCKET 5 (V,CD,F,G,S) R Dickin 12-10-0	X Aizpuru (7)

Evens Scottish Bambi, 7-4 Dr Rocket, 6-1 Northern Optimist, 14-1 Corpus, Monday Club

3.25 BOSBURY HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,717: 2m 1f) (5)

1	3111	ADDED DIMENSION 17 (CD,S) P Wadsworth 6-11-10	X Aizpuru (7)
2	1635	MENELAVE 29 (B,G) O Sherwood 7-11-8	J Osborne
3	-036	SCHNOZZLE 87 K Bridgwater 6-10-6	R Massey (3)
4	22-0	VA UTU 17 (D,F,G) D Lloyd 9-10-0	Sophie Mitchell (3)
5	0003	THE BREWER 23 J Tuck 5-10-0	R Bellamy

4-6 Added Dimension, 3-1 Menelave, 5-1 Schnozzle, 10-1 Va Utu, 25-1 The Brewer

4.00 CHARLIE KNIPE HUNTERS CHASE (Amateurs: £1,492: 3m 1f 110yd) (11)

1	P-01	HIGHWAY FIVE 10 (CD,B,S) Lady S Brooke 9-12-7	Miss E James (7)
2	1-PU	WHAT A TO DO 9 (F,S) C Sweeting 13-12-4	Miss L Sweeting (7)
3	P-21	CHIP'N'RUN 7P (F,G,S) Ms M Teague 11-12-0	J Comes (7)
4	3-31	FIRST HARVEST 7P (F,G,S) P Hanly 10-12-0	P Hanly (7)
5	46-5	GAY RUFFIAN 16 (C,G,S) Mrs D Dyson 11-12-0	Miss C Dyson (7)
6	0-66	KINGFISHER BAY 7P (D,F,G) O Little 12-12-0	G Sheridan (7)
7	-154	ORTON HOUSE 10 (F,G) S Kelly 10-12-0	R Burton (7)
8	12/3	PRINCE OF VERONA 28P (G,S) T Holland-Martin 10-12-0	R Sweeting (7)
9	-322	TEATRADER 10 (F,G,S) Miss T Blazey 11-12-0	Miss T Blazey (7)
10	2-P2	THE RUM MARINER 7P (F,G,S) Mrs J Stalton 10-12-0	R Thornton (5)
11	P11/	PENLEA LADY 677 (F) Mrs S Addicott 10-11-9	S Lloyd (7)

7-2 Teatrader, 4-1 Highway Five, 6-1 Chip'n'run, Prince Of Verona, 7-1 What A To Do, First Harvest, 8-1 Penlea Lady, 12-1 others.

4.30 TEME MARES ONLY HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,703: 2m 3f 110yd) (5)

1	F-20	JOSIFINA 87 (F,S) A Foster 6-11-12	Mr R Thornton (5)
2	P001	SWING QUARTET 8 (G) N Twiston-Davies 7-10-9	C Llewellyn
3	4263	KADARI 22 (V,G,S) W Clay 8-10-4	Guy Lewis (3)
4	63-6	SEVSO 17 (C,S) R Baker 8-10-0	V Slattery
5	504	PRECIOUS ISLAND 21 P Dalton 4-10-0	B Fenton

Evens Swing Quartet, 11-4 Kadari, 5-1 Josifina, 7-1 Precious Island, 10-1 Sevso.

5.00 MALVERN NOVICES CHASE (£2,868: 2m) (8)

1	1UP1	NORTHERN SINGER 17 (D,F,G,S) R Hodges 7-12-0	T Dascombe (3)
2	4541	QUICK QUOTE 12 (D,F) Mrs I McKie 7-11-3	L Harvey
3	1054	TENAYESTELIGN 16 (D,F,G) D Marks 9-11-3	Mr R Thornton (5)
4	00-P	JASONS FARM 10 W Clay 7-11-2	Guy Lewis (3)
5	4004	QUICK DECISION 46 J Cresswell 6-11-2	N T Egan (7)
6	0-3U	RELAXED LAD 10 J Peacock 6-11-2	R Bellamy
7	P-0F	WHOD OF THOUGHT IT 32 P Chamings 6-11-2	B Fenton
8	P/04	QUEENS CURATE 12 Mrs E Scott 10-10-11	B Powell

6-4 Northern Singer, 7-4 Quick Quote, 9-2 Tenayestelign, 8-1 Queens Curate, 12-1 Relaxed Lad, 16-1 Quick Decision, 33-1 others.

5.30 LEVY BOARD NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,528: 3m 2f) (17)

1	2515	COPPER COIL 35 (S) W G M Turner 7-11-13	J Power (7)
2	4U3F	LORD NITROGEN 85 B Llewellyn 7-11-7	Mr J L Llewellyn
3	3-56	PROFESSOR PAGE 14 T Thomson Jones 7-11-3	X Aizpuru (7)
4	0404	COOLE CHERRY 8 C Barwell 7-10-11	B Fenton
5	001P	SAMMORELLO 16 (CD,S) N Twiston-Davies 6-10-6	C Llewellyn
6	2-50	YOUNG TESS 64F P Bowen 7-10-5	Mr R Thornton (5)
7	0051	SPITFIRE BRIDGE 8 (G) G McCourt 5-10-4	R Hobson (7)
8	0001	NODDADANTE 12 (G) N Mitchell 7-10-2	Sophie Mitchell (3)
9	3434	MANOR BOUND 144 (F) Mrs S Williams 7-10-0	R Massey (3)
10	0640	BROWN WREN 30 P Hobbs 6-10-0	G Tormey
11	P552	CRAVATE 26 P Hobbs 7-10-0	M Moran (7)
12	P00	LADY OF MINE 16 P Bowen 7-10-0	W Marston
13	000P	NORDIC FLIGHT 10 HB R Eckley 9-10-0	V Slattery
14	00PP	KENTUCKY GOLD 22 (B) Mrs C Williamson 8-10-0	L O'Hara
15	65FP	PENNANT COTTAGE 35 (S) W Jenks 9-10-0	R Bellamy
16	00P0	SEMINOLE WIND 12 (V) C Barwell 6-10-0	B Powell
17	0P00	BROWNSCROFT 16 Miss P Whittle 9-10-0	M Griffiths (7)

5-1 Cravate, 6-1 Noddadante, 7-1 Sammorello, 8-1 Brown Wren, Spitfire Bridge, 10-1 Professor Page, 12-1 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: N Twiston-Davies, 29 winners from 93 runners, 31.2%; P Hobbs, 15 from 57, 26.3%; Mrs S Williams, 3 from 18, 16.7%; W Clay, 4 from 25, 16.0%; O Sherwood, 3 from 19, 15.8%; K Bridgwater, 7 from 46, 15.2%

JOCKEYS: B Fenton, 7 winners from 20 rides, 35.0%; C Llewellyn, 21 from 73, 28.8%; J Osborne, 8 from 42, 19.0%; R Massey, 4 from 26, 15.4%; P McLoughlin, 6 from 41, 14.6%; D J Burchell, 6 from 44, 13.6%

NEWCASTLE

THUNDERER

2.15 Quango. 2.50 Dual Image. 3.20 Meadow Hymn. 3.55 Strath Royal. 4.25 Brighter Shade. 4.55 Shanavogh.

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 4.25 BRIGHTER SHADE.

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO FIRM IN PLACES) SIS

2.15 WELCOME TO GOSFORTH PARK NOVICES HURDLE (£2,453: 2m) (23 runners)

1	15	ADVANCE EAST 91 (D,G) M Dods 5-11-8	R Supple	86
2	0-14	BRUMON 7 (V,D,S) D Moffatt 6-11-8	DOUBTFUL	75
3	41	FAR AHEAD 21 (D,G) J Eyre 5-11-8	B Storey	95
4	-273	KILLBALLY BOY 16 (D,G) J Howard Johnson 7-11-8	M Moloney	88
5	3303	MITHRAIC 17 (D,F) W Cunningham 5-11-8	M Foster	92
6	185	QUANGO 28 (G) J Fitzgerald 5-11-8	F Leahy (3)	91
7	663	BANKER COUNT 16 M W Easterby 5-11-2	P Midgley (3)	97
8	060/	BATTERY FIRED 1201 N Mason 6-11-2	S Haworth (7)	–
9	2-02	GOSPEL SONG 18 (BF) A Whillans 5-11-2	G Lee (3)	[illegible]
10		INYOUGOBLUE H Alexander 5-11-2	Mr T J Barry (7)	–
11	0-00	PAPARAZZO 28 (B) G Moore 6-11-2	J Callaghan	–
12	00	PETRICO 17 P Beaumont 5-11-2	B Grattan (5)	–
13	00	PRAISE BE 10 T Tate 7-11-2	R Garritty	–
14		RAMBLING RAJAH Mrs S Bradburne 5-11-2	Mr M Bradburne (7)	–
15	0	SNIPER 18 F Murphy 5-11-2	A Roche	–
16	/6-P	SOCCER BALL 217 T Watson 7-11-2	E Callaghan (3)	–
17	PP	SOLWAY KING 19 M Barnes 7-11-2	S Taylor (5)	–
18	306	DELIGHTFOOL 12 R Nixon 6-10-11	G Cahill	–
19	P0	EVENING DUSK 10 J Oliver 5-10-11	S Melrose (7)	–
20	/2-4	RAISE A DOLLAR 17 P Beaumont 7-10-11	Mr S Swiers	–
21		SHARLEY COP M Camacho 5-10-11	L Wyer	–
22	3P0	KHALIKHOUM 6 Sir John Barlow Bt 4-10-8	J Supple	69
23	305	ONYOUROWN 101 J Howard Johnson 4-10-8	D Parker	67

4-1 Far Ahead, 5-1 Gospel Song, 6-1 Mithraic, 7-1 Banker Count, 10-1 Quango, Advance East, 14-1 others.

2.50 GRAINGER TOWN HANDICAP CHASE (£2,785: 2m 110yd) (5)

1	3253	TIMBUCKTOO 39 (G,S) J Oliver 10-12-0	B Storey	95
2	4132	DUAL IMAGE 8 (CD,F,G,S) J Fitzgerald 10-11-1	R Garritty	[illegible]
3	1441	CROSSHOT 17 (CD,F,G,S) R McDonald 10-10-5	R Supple	90
4	-153	GROUSE-N-HEATHER 9 (D,F,G) P Monteith 8-10-3	G Cahill	92
5	0P53	BLAZING DAWN 11 (CD,F,G,S) J Hubbuck 10-10-0	G Lee (3)	92

9-4 Dual Image, 5-2 Crosshot, 7-2 Blazing Dawn, 5-1 Timbucktoo, Grouse-N-Heather

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: *GOLDENSWIFT* (12.45 Uttoxeter)
Next best: Musthaveaswig (1.50 Uttoxeter)

3.20 TYNE BRIDGE HANDICAP HURDLE (£3,404: 3m) (7)

1	3416	PUREVALUE 22 (G,S) M W Easterby 6-11-10	R Garritty	92
2	111-	UNLATHEN 292 (G,S) Mrs M Reveley 7-11-8	G Lee (3)	[illegible]
3	2311	MEADOW HYMN 30 (G) J Fitzgerald 6-11-6	W Dwan	96
4	6055	COOL LUKE 18 (F,S) F Murphy 8-10-13	Michael Brennan (3)	90
5	120/	KINDA GROOVY 899 (F,G) I Park 8-10-12	N Smith	–
6	-3F0	SUDDEN SPIN 36F (G,S) J Norton 7-10-11	E Callaghan (3)	95
7	-302	LEADING PROSPECT 8 (G,S) Mrs J Goodfellow 10-10-10	N Horrocks (7)	88

2-1 Unlathen, 5-2 Meadow Hymn, 9-2 Leading Prospect, 5-1 Purevalue, 8-1 Cool Luke, 20-1 Kinda Groovy, Sudden Spin.

3.55 NEWCASTLE HANDICAP CHASE (£4,280: 3m) (6)

1	11/5	STRATH ROYAL 19 (CD,F,G,S) O Brennan 11-12-0	M Brennan	–
2	-213	WHISPERING STEEL 14 (D,BF,G,S) G Richards 11-11-11	B Storey	96
3	3212	ALJADEER 17 (F,G) M W Easterby 8-10-12	R Garritty	[illegible]
4	4U22	CELTIC BOY 9 (CD,F,G,S) Mrs J Goodfellow 11-10-10	Mr R Hale	98
5	3F2F	WESTWELL BOY 35 (D,F,G) P Beaumont 11-10-3	R Supple	89
6	2020	DEEP DECISION 49 (C,F,G) P Cheesbrough 11-10-0	K Johnson	91

5-2 Aljadeer, 11-4 Whispering Steel, 4-1 Celtic Boy, 5-1 Westwell Boy, 7-1 Deep Decision, 12-1 Strath Royal

4.25 NORTHUMBERLAND NOVICES CHASE (£2,950: 2m 4f) (7)

1	2315	BOLD ACCOUNT 10 (B,CD,BF,G) G Moore 7-11-8	B Storey	83
2	161	BRIGHTER SHADE 19 (CD,F,G) Mrs M Reveley 7-11-8	R Garritty	[illegible]
3	FU31	WIWAY 4 (F,S) M Barnes 7-11-8	S Taylor (5)	72
4	F003	CORSTON JOKER 8 L Lungo 7-11-2	R Supple	71
5	3F54	FINE TUNE 15 Mrs S Bradburne 7-11-2	M Foster	66
6	3450	MALTA MAN 26 P Cheesbrough 7-11-2	G F Ryan (5)	–
7	0OF4	SHUT UP 8 (G) Mrs E Moscrop 8-10-11	K Johnson	–

2-1 Brighter Shade, 5-2 Wiway, 5-1 Bold Account, 7-1 Malta Man, 8-1 Fine Tune, 10-1 Corston Joker, 20-1 Shut Up

4.55 STUDENT CITY NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (£3,550: 2m 4f) (8)

1	2141	SHANAVOGH 21 (D,G) G Moore 6-11-10	J Callaghan	97
2	14	STAN'S YOUR MAN 102 (CD,F) Mrs J Goodfellow 7-11-4	N Bentley	88
3	0311	HERE COMES HERBIE 21 (D,G) W Storey 5-11-1	M Moloney	[illegible]
4	2-03	TWEEDSWOOD 92 P Beaumont 7-10-10	R Supple	98
5	4-38	JUBRAN 7 (D,F) J Dodds 11-10-9	B Storey	98
6	P-43	CHOPWELL DRAPES 12 J Howard Johnson 7-10-7	M Foster	91
7	36F1	MOCK TRIAL 60 (D,S) Mrs J Ramsden 4-10-7	R Garritty	90
8	020	LOSTRIS 47 M Dods 6-10-3	N Smith	95

9-4 Mock Trial, 3-1 Here Comes Herbie, 7-2 Shanavogh, 5-1 Stan's Your Man, 6-1 Tweedswood, 8-1 Lostris, 14-1 others

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: M Camacho, 5 winners from 9 runners, 55.6%; Mrs M Reveley, 36 from 156, 23.1%; O Brennan, 3 from 14, 21.4%; J Fitzgerald, 13 from 64, 20.3%; M W Easterby, 10 from 51, 19.6%.

JOCKEYS: Martin Brennan, 3 winners from 12 rides, 25.0%; R Garritty, 11 from 69, 15.9%; L Wyer, 15 from 96, 15.6%; N Bentley, 7 from 47, 14.9%; M Foster, 3 from 21, 14.3%. Only qualifiers.

RACING NEXT WEEK

MONDAY: Southwell (AW, first race, 2.20), Market Rasen (2.10), Newcastle (2.00)
TUESDAY: Fontwell Park (2.00), Sedgefield (2.10), Uttoxeter (2.30)
WEDNESDAY: Exeter (2.20), Ludlow (2.00), Towcester (2.10)
THURSDAY: Doncaster (C4, 1.30), Plumpton (2.25), Wincanton (2.15)
FRIDAY: Doncaster (C4, 1.30), Kelso (1.40), Newbury (1.50).
SATURDAY: Doncaster (C4, 2.00), Bangor (2.10), Lingfield Park (1.30), Newbury (BBC, 1.15)

Flat meetings in bold

UTTOXETER

THUNDERER

12.45 Coverdale Lane
1.15 GROUSEMAN (nap)
1.50 Musthaveaswig
2.25 Monymoss
3.00 Conti D'Estruval
3.30 Bobby Grant
4.05 Rangitikei

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 1.15 DOMAPPEL (nap).

GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE CARD

101 113143 GOOD TIMES 13 (BF,F,G,S) (Mrs D Robeson) B Hall 12-0 .... B West (7) 88

Racecard number. Six-figure form (F — fell. P — pulled up. U — unseated rider. B — brought down. S — slipped up. R — refused. D — disqualified). Horse's name. Days since last outing: F if flat. (B — blinkers. V — visor. H — hood. E — Eyeshield. C — course winner. D — distance winner. CD — course and distance winner. BF — beaten favourite in latest race). Going on which horse has won (F — firm, good to firm, hard. G — good. S — soft, good to soft, heavy). Owner in brackets. Trainer. Age and weight. Rider plus any allowance. The Times Private Handicapper's rating.

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO FIRM IN PLACES) SIS
TOTE JACKPOT MEETING

12.45 EBF TATTERSALLS (IRELAND) MARES NOVICES CHASE FINAL (Handicap: £10,796: 2m 5f) (11 runners) C4

101	102313	BLAZE OF HONOUR 16 (F,G,S) (Mrs A Leahy) A O'Brien (Ire) 6-12-0	C F Swan	91
102	2-14123	SECOND CALL 23 (F,G,S) (J Day) T Forster 8-11-13	R Dunwoody	91
103	1P-1111	SAIL BY THE STARS 28 (D,G,S) (T Nixon) T Forster 8-11-10	S Wynne	90
104	12-3215	MISS DISKIN 54 (D,S) (M Forester) R Buckler 8-11-3	B Powell	83
105	351F-13	HARVEST VIEW 23 (C,BF,F,G,S) (Dr P Brown) C Brooks 7-11-2	M Berry (7)	96
106	33U131	COVERDALE LANE 16 (C,S) (J Pilkington) Mrs S Smith 10-10-12	R Guest	97
107	30-2152	GOLDENSWIFT 37 (G,S) (Mrs S Watts) G Balding 7-10-11	B Fenton	94
108	4-44251	TELLICHERRY 16 (G) (Mrs C Clatworthy) Miss H Knight 8-10-7	J Culloty	89
109	3P-332P	COUNTRY STORE 9 (S) (Westfield Racing) A Jones 8-10-6	D Bridgwater	88
110	6P-1303	DUBELLE 150 (F) (W Lee) J King 7-10-0	T J Murphy	84
111	135015	KOO'S PROMISE 21 (D,F,G) (G Warren Ltd) C Popham 6-10-0	R Farrant	[illegible]

Long handicap: Dubelle 9-12, Koo's Promise 9-11.

BETTING: 3-1 Sail By The Stars, 4-1 Goldenswift, 6-1 Harvest View, 7-1 Coverdale Lane, 8-1 Second Call, Blaze Of Honour, Tellicherry, 14-1 others.

1996: GARRYLOUGH 7-10-8 M Dwyer (9-4) D Gandolfo 6 ran

FORM FOCUS

BLAZE OF HONOUR beat Crehelp Express 5½l in 13-runner mares chase at Thurles (2m 2f, soft) on penultimate start. SECOND CALL beat Josifina 5l in 6-runner novice chase at Wincanton (2m, good to firm) Dec 96. SAIL BY THE STARS beat Stickwithme 7l in 16-runner novice chase at Windsor (2m 5f, good). HARVEST VIEW beat Galaxie 2½l in 11-runner novice chase here (2m 4f, good). COVERDALE LANE beat Gold Pigeon 2½l in 9-runner novice handicap chase at Wetherby (3m 1f, heavy). GOLDENSWIFT beat Lottery Ticket 2½l in 7-runner novice handicap chase at Newbury (3m, good). Selection: COVERDALE LANE

1.15 SCOTTISH EQUITABLE / JOCKEYS ASSOCIATION SERIES HANDICAP HURDLE (Final: £10,065: 2m 4f 110yd) (7 runners) C4

201	1 513-31	GROUSEMAN 26 (B,F,G,S) (Acrastec) Miss H Knight 11-12-0	J Culloty	95
202	323231	LORD MCMURROUGH 15 (S) (J Neville) J Neville 7-11-11	R Farrant	93
203	05-1532	DOMAPPEL 49 (G) (M Banks) Mrs J Cecil 5-11-7	T Kent	95
204	1P1201	EDGEMOOR PRINCE 14 (D,F,G,S) (The Racing Hares) P Hobbs 6-11-6	G Tormey	[illegible]
205	1-4PP32	THURSDAY NIGHT 8 (D,S) (R Haggas) J Fitzgerald 6-11-5	P Niven	90
206	P0-5231	JACKSON FLINT 16 (D,F,G) (Mrs L Turner) T Thomson Jones 9-10-6	R Dunwoody	97
207	3P15-24	TOPSAWYER 22 (F,G) (Miss S Hall) Miss S Hall 9-10-5	A P McCoy	92

BETTING: 5-2 Edgemoor Prince, 3-1 Domappel, 9-2 Grouseman, 6-1 Lord McMurrough, Thursday Night, 7-1 Jackson Flint, 14-1 Topsawyer

1996: KADARI 7-11-6 Guy Lewis (6-1) W Clay 13 ran

FORM FOCUS

GROUSEMAN beat Master 11l in 5-runner handicap hurdle at Fontwell (2m 2f 110yd, soft). LORD MCMURROUGH beat Celtic Rose 1¾l in 11-runner handicap hurdle at Newbury (2m 5f, good to soft). DOMAPPEL beat Romancy Pete 9l in 6-runner handicap hurdle at Warwick (2m 5f, good) with GROUSEMAN (2lb better off) 21l 3rd. EDGEMOOR PRINCE beat Lets Be Frank neck in 11-runner handicap hurdle at Warwick (2m 4f 110yd, good). THURSDAY NIGHT 2½l 2nd of 11 to Sanmer in handicap hurdle at Market Rasen (2m 5f 110yd, good). JACKSON FLINT beat Operatic 2½l in handicap hurdle at Ludlow (2m 5f 110yd, good). Selection: LORD MCMURROUGH

1.50 MARSTONS PEDIGREE MIDLANDS GRAND NATIONAL (Handicap chase: grade III: £30,867: 4m 2f) (10 runners) C4

301	2-23111	LORD GYLLENE 35 (CD,G,S) (S Clarke) S Brookshaw 9-11-10	A Dobbin	[illegible]
302	1F-5111	SEVEN TOWERS 28 (G,S) (Mrs E Murray) Mrs M Reveley 8-11-4	P Niven	[illegible]
303	F-5P334	KILLESHIN 14 (D,G,S) (H Manners) H Manners 11-10-13	S Curran	95
304	R-11212	MCGREGOR THE THIRD 22 (C,F,G) (Mrs D Whitaker) G Richards 11-10-8	R Dunwoody	98
305	F13-612	SISTER STEPHANIE 14 (BF,G,S) (The Antwick Pnrs) G McCourt 8-10-6	D Bridgwater	95
306	3P1414	MUSTHAVEASWIG 14 (C,BF,F,G) (P D Fasteners Ltd) D Nicholson 11-10-5	R Johnson	92
307	2-33111	ACT THE WAG 8 (F,G) (R Ogden) M Todhunter 8-10-3	A P McCoy	97
308	0654-05	SCRIBBLER 8 (B,G,S) (M Fennell) G McCourt 11-10-0	C F Swan	84
309	P-2P542	BEAUREPAIRE 14 (G,S) (Pell-mell Partners) R Alner 9-10-0	A Thornton	85
310	1P-1044	SPECIAL ACCOUNT 28 (F,G,S) (T Fiorillo) C Barwell 11-10-0	B Fenton	87

Long handicap: Scribbler 9-10, Beaurepaire 9-5, Special Account 8-6.

BETTING: 2-1 Lord Gyllene, 11-4 Seven Towers, 6-1 McGregor The Third, Act The Wag, 12-1 Killeshin, Sister Stephanie, 14-1 Musthaveaswig, 16-1 Beaurepaire, 25-1 Scribbler, 66-1 Special Account

1996: ANOTHER EXCUSE 8-10-0 B Powell (14-1) E O'Sullivan (Ire) 17 ran

FORM FOCUS

LORD GYLLENE beat Mudahim 8l in 9-runner handicap chase over course and distance (good). SEVEN TOWERS beat Ivy House 8l in handicap chase at Newcastle (4m 1f, good) with KILLESHIN (8lb better off) neck 3rd. MCGREGOR THE THIRD beat Irish Stamp 18l in chase at Cheltenham (3m 7f, good) on penultimate start. SISTER STEPHANIE beat River Mandate 16l in handicap chase at Towcester (3m 1f, good). MUSTHAVEASWIG beat Bandor Mark 5l in 7-runner handicap chase at Warwick (3m 5f, good to firm) on penultimate start. ACT THE WAG beat Heavenly Citizen 6l in handicap chase at Catterick (3m 6f, good) Feb 96. Selection: LORD GYLLENE (nap)

2.25 BET WITH THE TOTE NOVICES CHASE FINAL (Handicap: £14,070: 3m 2f) (10 runners) C4

401	1/0U6-14	KAMIKAZE 36 (B,BF,G) (Major B Gatensbury) K Bailey 7-11-10	C O'Dwyer	92
402	283P41	MR PICKPOCKET 30 (G,S) (J Holmes) Miss H Knight 9-11-6	J F Titley	90
403	4-2U112	IVY HOUSE 28 (G,S) (Mrs L Joughin) J J O'Neill 9-11-0	R McGrath (5)	98
404	324122	MONYMOSS 21 (G) (S Powell) Mrs S Smith 8-10-13	R Guest	95
405	21/34P4	MAJOR LOOK 22 (C,F) (Mrs H Clarke) S Brookshaw 9-10-11	A Dobbin	80
406	20-2P31	FOXTROT ROMEO 17 (G) (Lady Cobham) C Brooks 7-10-8	G Bradley	[illegible]
407	5F5-2F0	THE SHY PADRE 51 (M Bateman) Mrs J Pitman 8-10-0	R Farrant	83
408	2-31F	JUDICIOUS CAPTAIN 15 (BF,S) (J Adam) Mrs J Storey 10-10-0	Mr C Storey	95
409	0-035U1	PAVLOVA 15 (S) (Mrs M McGlone) R Rowe 7-10-0	D O'Sullivan	89
410	6-PP003	BALLYDOUGAN 9 (V) (Mrs R Mathew) R Mathew 9-10-0	D Walsh	88

Long handicap: The Shy Padre 9-12, Judicious Captain 9-10, Pavlova 9-3, Ballydougan 8-10.

BETTING: 3-1 Ivy House, 7-2 Foxtrot Romeo, 4-1 Mr Pickpocket, 6-1 Kamikaze, 7-1 Monymoss, 10-1 others.

1996: EVEN BLUE 8-10-5 D McCain (14-1) Mrs C Black 6 ran

FORM FOCUS

KAMIKAZE beat MONYMOSS (17lb better off) 11l in 14-runner novice chase at Market Rasen (2m 6f 110yd, good) with MAJOR LOOK (17lb better off) 17l 4th. MR PICKPOCKET beat Duhallow Lodge 4l in 12-runner handicap chase at Taunton (3m, good). IVY HOUSE beat Woodlands Boy 5l in 12-runner handicap chase at Market Rasen (3m 4f 110yd, good). MONYMOSS beat Seeking Gold 3½l in 12-runner novice handicap chase at Hexham (3m 1f, good). FOXTROT ROMEO beat Mr Playfull 17l in 14-runner novice chase at Taunton (3m, good to soft). JUDICIOUS CAPTAIN beat Naughty Future 1¾l in 11-runner novice chase at Ayr (3m 3f 110yd, soft). PAVLOVA beat Wingspan 3l in handicap chase at Plumpton (2m 5f, soft). Selection: MR PICKPOCKET

3.00 DHL WORLDWIDE EXPRESS HANDICAP CHASE (£4,509: 2m 5f) (7 runners)

501	3-2601F	GARRYLOUGH 30 (V,CD,BF,F,G,S) (T Whitley) D Gandolfo 8-11-10	D Fortt (5)	97
502	F5-6511	DISCO DES MOTTES 8 (G,S) (R Ogden) G Richards 6-11-7	R Dunwoody	[illegible]
503	UP5343	CONTI D'ESTRUVAL 14 (V,D,F,G) (B Kealy) G Balding 7-11-4	A P McCoy	99
504	1F/4-P31	OVER THE POLE 21 (G) (Pell-mell Partners) P Chamings 10-11-2	A Thornton	92
505	P0P-F5P	FLORIDA SKY 102 (S) (Uplands Bloodstock) C Brooks 10-10-11	G Bradley	–
506	321221	KENMORE-SPEED 9 (F,G,S) (K Dacker) Mrs S Smith 10-10-8	R Guest	95
507	1-32224	FLAPJACK LAD 37 (CD,BF,F,G,S) (T Ounsley) N Twiston-Davies 8-10-1	D Walsh	88

BETTING: 6-4 Disco Des Mottes, 7-2 Garrylough, 6-1 Conti D'Estruval, 7-1 Over The Pole, 10-1 others.

1996: SAILOR JIM 9-10-0 C Maude (5-1) P Dalton 9 ran

FORM FOCUS

GARRYLOUGH beat Five To Seven 14l in 6-runner handicap chase at Kempton (2m 4f 110yd, good to firm). DISCO DES MOTTES beat Solba 23l in 5-runner handicap chase at Ayr (3m 4f, soft). CONTI D'ESTRUVAL about 24½l 3rd of 8 to Frickley in handicap chase at Doncaster (2m 3f 110yd, good). OVER THE POLE beat Jason's Boy 9l in 4-runner handicap chase at Doncaster (2m 3f 110yd, good). KENMORE-SPEED beat Solomon's Dancer 13l in 4-runner novice chase at Carlisle (2m 4f 110yd, heavy). FLAPJACK LAD 14l 2nd of 8 to Mely Moss in handicap chase over course and distance (good) on penultimate start. Selection: DISCO DES MOTTES

3.30 WEATHERBYS INSURANCE HANDICAP HURDLE (£3,501: 2m 6f 110yd) (5 runners)

601	24-5005	MOVING OUT 14 (F,G,S) (Mrs S Brasher) Miss H Knight 9-11-10	R Dunwoody	96
602	3111	BOBBY GRANT 28 (G,S) (J Thompson) C Grant 6-11-1	P Niven	97
603	4-04253	ROYAL PIPER 22 (C,D,S) (A Darlington) A J Wilson 10-11-0	R Greene	[illegible]
604	132114	SANTELLA BOY 168 (B,D,F) (The Link Leasing Pnrs) C Mann 5-10-12	J Railton	98
605	14801/0-	WINN'S PRIDE 497 (F,S) (Mrs W Bailey) R Hollinshead 6-10-8	S Wynne	–

BETTING: 6-4 Bobby Grant, 5-2 Santella Boy, 3-1 Royal Piper, 6-1 Moving Out, 20-1 Winn's Pride.

1996: YES MAN 7-10-9 J F Titley (6-1 fav) Miss H Knight 16 ran

FORM FOCUS

MOVING OUT 30½l 5th of 13 to Shenfimour in handicap hurdle at Newbury (2m 110yd, good to soft). BOBBY GRANT beat Ashgrove Dancer 4l in 19-runner novice hurdle at Newcastle (2m 4f, good). ROYAL PIPER neck 2nd of 13 to Storm Dust in handicap hurdle at Kempton (2m 5f, good to firm). SANTELLA BOY beat Buglet neck in 5-runner handicap hurdle at Exeter (2m 6f, firm). WINN'S PRIDE beat Lien De Famille neck in 6-runner novice handicap hurdle at Aintree (2m 4f, firm) May 95. Selection: BOBBY GRANT

4.05 PRUE FARMER 17TH BIRTHDAY NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (£2,390: 2m) (12 runners)

1	113412	RANGITIKEI 14 (D,G) (Mrs J Mayo) C Mann 6-11-8	R Dunwoody	[illegible]
2		BARTY BOY (The Bartlett Family) J Mackie 5-11-1	T Eley	–
3		EAGER BEAVER (Mrs R Humphries) Miss H Knight 5-11-1	J F Titley	–
4	605	EUROFAST PET 22 (Eurofast Petrochemical Ltd) S Brookshaw 7-11-1	A Dobbin	65
5	63/F54P	FILS DE CRESSON 32 (J Adam) J Adam 7-11-1	J Railton	72
6	0-P	LORD LOVE 26 (J Corbett) P Chamings 5-11-1	A Thornton	–
7	3430-55	MAITRE DE MUSIQUE 47 (S) (R Ogden) M Todhunter 6-11-1	A P McCoy	80
8	00	RED OASSIS 25 (M Penny) H Oliver 5-11-1	Jacqui Oliver	–
9	40-34	SHEKELS 51 (Uplands Bloodstock) C Brooks 6-11-1	G Bradley	81
10	50	THE EENS 36 (Shaw Hill Golf Club) D McCain 5-11-1	T Jenks	–
11	0	SUNSWORD 39 (Mrs W Smith) M Barraclough 6-10-10	T J Murphy	–
12	0	SHAWKEY 21 (Clayton Bigley Pnrs Ltd) D McCain 4-10-7	D Walsh	–

BETTING: 5-4 Rangitikei, 4-1 Shekels, 6-1 Maitre De Musique, 8-1 Eager Beaver, 10-1 others.

1996: FLYING INSTRUCTOR 6-11-8 R Bellamy (4-1 fav) P Webber 16 ran

FORM FOCUS

RANGITIKEI beat Neat Feat 8l in 9-runner novice handicap hurdle at Newbury (2m 110yd, good) on penultimate start. EUROFAST PET 28l 5th of 10 to Break The Rules in novice hurdle at Haydock (2m, good). FILS DE CRESSON about 5½l 4th of 19 to Jervaulx in novice hurdle at Ayr (2m, good) with MAITRE DE MUSIQUE ½l 5th. RED OASSIS 45l 9th of 19 to Autumn Lord in National Hunt Flat at Market Rasen (1m 5f 110yd, good). SHEKELS about 4¾l 4th of 21 to Legible in novice hurdle at Huntingdon (2m 110yd, good). THE EENS 22½l 5th of 14 to Scoring Pedigree in National Hunt Flat at Bangor (2m 1f, good). Selection: RANGITIKEI

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Runs	%	JOCKEYS	Winners	Rides	%
C Brooks	8	23	34.8	M Berry	3	6	50.0
C Mann	6	24	25.0	D Walsh	5	17	29.4
J J O'Neill	8	34	23.5	J Titley	9	32	28.1
D Nicholson	21	91	23.1	A P McCoy	15	55	27.3
S Brookshaw	10	44	22.7	G Bradley	9	35	25.7
J Fitzgerald	7	31	22.6	P Niven	5	20	25.0

[illegible]

IN BRIEF

England shift balance of power

THE balance of power in British indoor bowls shifted unexpectedly yesterday when England surprised Scotland, 135-113, in the final session of the home international series at Ballymoney (David Rhys Jones writes).

The Scots, who had won the Hilton Trophy six times, went into their match needing to win by a 16-shot margin in order to break new ground with a seventh successive victory, but the scale of defeat conferred upon them the indignity of the wooden spoon.

Under Tony Allcocks' captaincy and with five new caps in the team, England dominated from start to finish. Ireland beat Wales to finish runners-up.

☐ **Golf:** Simon Burnell shot a 66 to lead the Lonrho Kenya Open on nine-under-par, 133, at the halfway mark, but confessed that he was out of form. The 26-year-old from Watford scored an eagle and six birdies, but said: "I'm still not playing well, but my long putter is pure silk." He leads by one stroke from Mike Miller, the defending champion from Scotland, and Michael Scholz, of South Africa.

☐ **Motor rallying:** Mark Higgins, in a Nissan, and Gwyndaf Evans, in a Ford, were locked in fierce battle over the early stages of the Vauxhall Rally of Wales, sharing the lead after the first three stages. This first round of the Mobil 1 British rally championship started from Bromborough in The Wirral.

☐ **Cycling:** Chris Boardman, the 4,000 metres and one-hour world record-holder, has his first time-trial this year in Britain tomorrow. He will be the last man to start in a field of 120 riders in the Porthole Grand Prix around Lake Windermere.

☐ **Tennis:** Steffi Graf will make her return from a knee injury at the Hamburg Open on April 28. She has been out of action since January.

GOLF

Olazabal hints at return to top form

FROM MEL WEBB IN LISBON

THEY hung the "gone home" sign on Severiano Ballesteros's locker at the Portuguese Open at Aroeira yesterday and the Europe Ryder Cup captain was joined on the list of early departures by Sam Torrance, another Cup stalwart. Yet, as their fortunes waned, so those of José Maria Olazábal waxed. Olazábal is the bookmakers' favourite to win here and it seems that, although Olazábal had doubted their sanity, they might not be so potty after all.

Olazábal had a 67 to finish the day five strokes behind Michael Jonzon, who had a 65 and a total of 132, 12 under par, to lead by two from Wayne Riley, the defending champion, and Peter O'Malley, with Paul Broadhurst and Vanslow Phillips a further shot behind. Olazábal continued to assess his form at about 70 per cent of his best. He has had one eagle, eight birdies and only two bogeys in 36 holes; people are already quaking at the prospect of his return to full efficiency.

Ballesteros had a 72 to miss his fourth successive cut, this time by two shots on one over par, and, although it represented a marked improvement on his performance in Dubai, where he missed out by a distant 13 strokes, it had precisely the same effect — an unwanted weekend off duty.

He was joined on the list of early bathees by Torrance, who added a 70 to the calamitous 81 he had recorded the day before but still handsomely failed to beat the cut on seven over par.

Torrance has played in every Ryder Cup since 1981, but will have to buck up before long if he is to play in his ninth match in September. His game is ailing and he admits that he is out of condition. "I'm overweight, I'm not fit and I'm eating too much," he said mournfully, as if to emphasise the point.

Torrance has missed three cuts in four appearances this season and, although he is still ninth in the Ryder Cup table after some stalwart performances late last season, he is slipping fast. His decision to stop rolling his own cigarettes might account for both his excess baggage and his urge to satisfy reawakened taste buds. Instead of his trademark twiglike roll-ups, he is now puffing at cigars, which may be bigger but do not call for inhalation. "Cigarettes are no good for you," he said.

Nobody is arguing with that, but if the way back to form is the occasional lungful of tobacco smoke, an early trip to the corner shop for an ounce of the best and a packet of Rizlas might be indicated, for the sake of his game if not for his state of health. Quite aside from all that, a cigar cannot easily be tucked behind the ear.

And now, the fashion update promised yesterday. Phillips, the only man on the tour who wears a tie when playing, dipped into his stock from his sponsors, Tie Rack, and this time sported a natty red item.

Ben Hogan is said to have been the boyhood hero of Phillips, one of whose sisters designed his distinctive mode of dress, apparently in Hogan's honour. Perhaps he would have been better off idolising Bobby Locke or Bobby Jones, both of whom were regularly clad in long-sleeved white shirt and tie on the course — Hogan rarely was.

Scores, page 55

HUGH ROUTLEDGE

Mandy Sutton drives on the 2nd tee in the Roehampton Gold Cup yesterday. She finished on 146, three shots behind the winners, Joanne Oliver and Julie Forbes.

Montgomerie forced into waiting game

THUNDERSTORMS delayed the start of the Honda Classic golf tournament yesterday, leaving Europe's quintet of challengers with little chance of completing their second rounds at Heron Bay, Fort Lauderdale (a Correspondent writes).

Colin Montgomerie led the assault on Thursday with a four-under-par 68, one shot off the first-round lead shared by Lee Janzen and Paul Stankowski, both of the United States. Ian Woosnam and Bernhard Langer had rounds of 70, while Jesper Parnevik made 71 and Sandy Lyle 75.

Montgomerie has said he has no immediate intention of joining the US PGA Tour, unlike Woosnam, who is considering joining Nick Faldo on the circuit. Woosnam, disillusioned after slipping to No 33 in the world rankings, intends to play both the American and European Tours should he make the move. Langer, ranked No 18, has contemplated a similar route.

Minister determined to have his wicket way

SIMON BARNES

On Saturday

A GENERAL election is one of the few sporting events that knocks other forms of sport from the forefront of the national consciousness, but I am charmed to learn that even the Damoclesian possibility of an election being called on Monday will not prevent the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled from fulfilling his ambition of playing cricket at Lord's.

Alistair Burt, for it is he, has already scored a goal at Wembley, playing for Northern MPs. Now Lord's beckons. On Monday, England play Wales in an international for disabled players at the Lord's indoor school. Burt had long ago marked the occasion by challenging Clive Radley, formerly of Middlesex and England and now the MCC's head coach, to a single wicket competition and was not going to miss out merely because the future of the country is at stake.

However, the match has been brought forward to the lunch interval, to enable Burt, in the event of the calling of an election, to whiz up to the land of the midnight sun to hug the constituents of Bury North to his sporting bosom.

Ind coup

And here is a sporting bishop to go with the minister. The Right Rev William Ind, who becomes bishop of Truro in the autumn, is probably the only bishop to have been sent off in a hockey match. It happened in a thrilling encounter between Lincoln diocese and the Mother's Union when Ind was sent off for arguing with the umpire. At 54, he no longer plays hockey, but plans to continue his sporting career in the far-flung cricketing nation of Cornwall.

Keeping faith

Goalkeepers of the week are Luigi Buffom, of Parma, Italy's under-21 keeper, and Giuseppe Taglialatela, of Napoli. They are urging keepers of the world to unite: they have nothing to lose but their ancient class enemy, Sepp Blatter, the Fifa secretary. They see Blatter's attempt to introduce a new law, by which goalkeepers must release the ball after a mere eight seconds of hugging it to their chests gratefully, as a denial of human rights. Naturally, this column supports them — though in the full knowledge that if goalkeepers were not a despised minority, there would be no point in being one.

Word game

If you are (a) under 26 (b) think you can impress me and (c) could use £1,500, then here is what to do. Write up to 1,000 words on racing, a piece suitable for publication in the racing press, and enter it for the competition organised by the Martin Wills Memorial Trust, 12 Tokenhouse Yard, London EC2 7AN, stating name, date of birth, address and telephone number. Entries in by March 20 and make 'em good: I am one of the judges this year.

Letter letters

My recent piece on the sad fate that tends to meet football clubs whose names begin with the letter A has produced some important correspondence. Such a club is, of course, AFC Bournemouth, over which disaster hangs by a thread. Louis Burgess writes to document the fate of other A teams. He offers: Accrington Stanley, resigned from the Football League in March 1962; Aldershot, resigned from the Football League in March 1992; Aberdare, who lost their League place to Torquay in 1927; Ashington, who lost their League place in 1929; and Argonauts, who, in 1928, missed out on a place in the League despite polling 16 votes. Mr Burgess suggests that Arsenal should prepare to join the *Bundesliga* immediately — which would leave Aston Villa in the vulnerable slot behind them.

Andrew Skinner adds a further gloss on this important issue by pointing put that even if Bournemouth drop their charmingly precious AFC, they are not out of the wood. For B clubs tend also to find trouble. He cites: Bradford Park Avenue, kicked out of the Football League in 1970; Brighton and Hove Albion, flirting hourly with damnation; and Bristol Rovers, who continued their career of Big Issue-selling homelessness by moving in with Bristol rugby club this season. He also adds a note about the travails of his own beloved Brentford. And me, I begin to wonder if C clubs are all that safe.

No place to pass

One question seldom asked — and in many cases better *not* asked — of competitors in the longer events is how they manage their lavatorial arrangements. But really, my heart goes out to Nadezhda Ilvina, 22 miles down the road and a long, long way ahead of the rest in the Los Angeles marathon — and absolutely bursting. Eventually, she spotted a gas station — they don't have garages in the United States — and yanked at the door of the ladies. Which was, of course, locked. So she shrugged unhappily and grimacingly ran the rest of the way home. Judges claim that the detour gave her a 45-yard advantage — and she was disqualified.

Ilvina said tearfully: "I had been looking for a bathroom since mile three. I couldn't get in [at the aforementioned gas station] so I came back out at the same point I came in off the course." She had suffered from considerable discomfort across the entire course, but didn't dare take on any water. All in all, I think you could say that Ilvina did not have a nice day.

SPEEDWAY: NEW SEASON TRIGGERS SPENDING BATTLE BETWEEN CLUBS

Sweeping changes on track for elite

BY TONY HOARE

SPEEDWAY was a Seventies phenomenon, hitting peak popularity with riders such as Barry Briggs and Peter Collins helping it to become the country's second most popular spectator sport. Its profile has dwindled to near anonymity in the past ten years, but the sport has spent the winter trying to shed its dated image and head into a new era.

Speedway is motorcycle racing in stadiums, riders on 500cc machines with no brakes tackling oval tracks of up to 400 metres in length. The season opens this weekend and will feature racing at 29 different venues across the country until the end of October.

Sweeping changes have been made as the British Speedway Promoters' Association (BSPA) formed a new Elite League with the country's leading ten clubs. Terry Russell, the chairman of the BSPA, was the moving force behind the changes and feels the base has been laid for a successful summer.

"We have not just tinkered with it, we have done major surgery and the initial signs are very good," Russell said. "Within the Elite League, the promoters are reporting lots of enthusiasm and interest and season-ticket sales are good. I am very confident that we have got it right and that we will not need such major surgery from here on. Rome wasn't built in a day, but I believe we have done a lot for British speedway."

Plans for the Elite League have not gone through without criticism from the speedway public. The most unpopular proposal was to scrap fabric covers, which are attached to the riders' helmets to let the crowd and referee identify them.

The dated system has now been reinstated, but Russell will not let traditionalists stand in the way of progress, insisting that helmet covers will go eventually. "I care for the hard-core supporters, but unfortunately their money isn't enough, so I have got to try and get a broader audience," he said.

On the track, the arrival of the Elite League has sparked a spending battle between Bradford Dukes and Manchester's Belle Vue Aces, the northern rivals. Bradford's chances were hit by their failure to secure a work permit for Todd Wiltshire, the Australian, but their big-spending suggests that they are potential champions. On the other side of the Pennines, just days after settling a stadium rent dispute that threatened their existence, Belle Vue drafted in two leading Americans, Sam Ermolenko and Billy Hamill, the individual world champion.

Hamill, 26, will be the No 1 ranked rider in the Elite League and he feels the BSPA have made the right moves. "I like the changes," he said. "Just looking at the teams, it seems really exciting. It's going to be much more competitive than any year I have known in Britain."

Wolverhampton, the Premier League champions last year, also look menacing, as do previous champions. Eastbourne and Poole, Coventry, Swindon, Ipswich, King's Lynn and Peterborough make up the Elite League.

GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FIXTURES

RUGBY UNION

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

Five nations' championship

France v Scotland (at Parc des Princes, 2.0)
Wales v England (at Cardiff Arms Park)

Courage Clubs Championship
Second division

Rugby v Rotherham (1.0)

Third division

Exeter v Morley
Harrogate v Redruth
Leeds v Lydney (12.15)
London Welsh v Walsall (2.30)
Otley v Liverpool St Helens
Reading v Havant (2.30)
Rosslyn Park v Fylde
Wharfedale v Clifton

Fourth division north

Aspatria v Nuneaton
Hereford v Stoke-on-Trent
Lichfield v Birmingham/Solihull
Preston Grasshoppers v Kendal
Sandal v Worcester
Sheffield v Stourbridge
Winnington Park v Manchester

Fourth division south

Cheltenham v Newbury
Henley v Berry Hill
Metropolitan Police v Barking
North Walsham v Plymouth
Tabard v Askeans
Weston-super-Mare v High Wycombe (1.0)

NORTH: First division: Bridlington v Widnes, Broughton Park v Tynedale; Macclesfield v Bradford and Bingley; New Brighton v West Park Bramhope; Stockton v Sedgley Park, Wigton v Hull Ionians.

MIDLANDS: First division: Hinckley v Camp Hill

SOUTH WEST: First division: Brixham v Bridgwater; Gloucester Old Boys v Stroud; Maidenhead v St Ives; Matson v Barnstaple; Salisbury v Launceston; Torquay v Camborne.

Insurance Corporation League
First division

Blackrock College v Shannon (2.30)
Dungannon v Old Crescent (2.30)
Garryowen v Lansdowne (2.30)
Old Belvedere v Cork Constitution (2.30)
Old Wesley v St Mary's College (2.30)
Terenure College v Instonians (2.30)
Young Munster v Ballymena (2.30)

Second division

Clontarf v Monkstown (2.30)
DLSP v Bective Rangers (2.30)
Derry v Sunday's Well (2.30)
Dolphin v Skerries (2.30)
Greystones v NIFC (2.30)
Malone v Highfield (2.30)
Wanderers v UCC (2.30)

CLUB MATCHES: Blackheath v Saracens (1.0), Melrose v Langholm; Orrell v Coventry, Oxford University v Waseda University (5.45); Preston Lodge v West of Scotland (12.0)

RUGBY LEAGUE

Kick-off 2.30

NATIONAL CONFERENCE LEAGUE: Premier division: Beverley v Dudley Hill; Egremont v Wigan St Patrick's; Mayfield v Woolston; Saddleworth v Lock Lane; West Hull v Oldham St Annes. First division: Barrow Island v East Leeds, Eastmoor v Blackbrook; Millom v Wigan St Jude's; Moldgreen v Askam; Walney Central v Thornhill. Second division: Eccles v Skirlaugh, Featherstone Amateur v Dewsbury Moor; Normanton v Hull Dockers; Redhill v Ovenden, Shaw Cross v New Earswick; York Acorn v Milford.

HOCKEY

NATIONAL LEAGUE: First division: Beeston v Bromley (at Highfields, Notts, 1.30); Blueharts v Bournville (at Hitchin Boys School, 2.0); Hull v Trojans (at Hull University, 2.0); Indian Gymkhana v Brooklands (at Thornbury Avenue, Isleworth, 1.30), Isca v City of Portsmouth (at Exeter School, 12.30); Lewes v Crostyx (at Southdown Club, 1.30), Oxford Hawks v Doncaster (at Banbury Road, 1.30); Oxford University v Edgbaston (at St Edward's School, 12.0); St Albans v Harleston Magpies (at Clarence Park, 2.0); Stourport v Warrington (at Kidderminster School, 2.0)

NASTRO AZZURRO LEAGUE: Premier League: Old Whitgiftians v Spencer. Hampshire/Surrey: Goan v Blandford; Old Mid-Whitgiftians v Basingstoke, Petersfield v Southampton. Kent/Sussex: Belvedere v Bexleyheath, Blackheath v Bognor; Mid Sussex v Sevenoaks; Lloyds Bank v Eastbourne. Middx/Berks/Bucks and Oxon: Amersham v Mill Hill; Bracknell v West Hampstead; City of Oxford v Gerrards Cross; Eastcote v Harrow, Farnham Common v Marlow; Headington v Hayes, Newbury v Lions, Richings Park v OMT; Staines v Milton Keynes, Sunbury v PHC Chiswick

NORTHERN LEAGUE: First division: Harrogate v Ben Rhydding; Norton v Sheffield Bankers; Ramgarhia v Springfields; Southport v Formby; Swalwell v Neston; Timperley v Chester.

WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Balsam Leicester v Trojans (12.30); Clifton v Slough (at Clifton College, 2.30); Doncaster v Ipswich (at Bennetthorpe, 12.0), Sutton Canada Life v Hightown (11.30). First division: Bradford Swithenbank v Chelmsford Broadoak (1.50); Olton v Canterbury (2.0); Sunderland Bedans v Blueharts (12.30), Wimbledon v Bracknell (12.0) Second division: Loughborough Students v Ealing (2.30), Old Loughtonians v St Albans (1.0); West Witney v Sherwood (12.0), Woking v Exmouth (2.0).

WOMEN'S REGIONAL LEAGUES: East: Bexleyheath v Cambridge City; Harleston Magpies v Sevenoaks; Ipswich v Ashford, Welwyn Garden City v Bury St Edmunds. Midlands: Aldridge v Leicester; Bedford v Pickwick, Crimson Ramblers v West Bromwich, North Staffs v Hampton. North: Blackburn v Sheffield; Liverpool v Chester; Poynton v Wellon, York v Carlisle. South: Dulwich v Reading, Horsham v Tulse Hill; Southampton v City of Portsmouth, Winchmore Hill v Winchester; Worthing v Hampstead. West: Cheltenham v St Austell; Exeter v Wimborne; Redland v Leominster, Yate v Colwall

HOME NATIONS YOUTH TOURNAMENT: Under-16: Wales v Ireland (1.0), England v Scotland (2.0). Under-18: Ireland v Wales (12.0), England v Scotland (4.0) (all at Milton Keynes).

OTHER SPORT

BADMINTON: Yonex All-England Open Championships (NIA, Birmingham).

BASKETBALL: Budweiser League: Derby v Manchester (7.30), Leicester v Crystal Palace (7.30); Thames Valley v Leopards (8.0), Worthing v Hemel and Watford (8.0). National League: Men: First division: Bury and Bolton v Nottingham (7.30), Cardiff v Brixton (8.0), Coventry v Liverpool (7.30); Guildford v Stockton (8.0), Westminster v Plymouth (8.0) Second division: Aston v South Bank (7.30); Bournemouth v Flintshire (8.0), Chessington v Sheffield (8.0); Solihull v South Wales (8.0); Thames Valley v Northampton (3.30) Women: First division: Barking and Dagenham v Rhondda (8.0), Birmingham v Nottingham (4.0), Harlesden v Spelthorne (7.0); London v Crystal Palace (8.0), Thames Valley v Ipswich (5.45). Second division: Play-offs: Semi-final: Leicester v Manchester (5.0)

ICE HOCKEY: Superleague play-offs: Group A: Ayr v Newcastle (6.30). Group B: Sheffield v Basingstoke (6.35); Bracknell v Nottingham (6.30)

LACROSSE: Shepherds Friendly Society League, Premier division: Boardman and Eccles v Mellor; Heaton Mersey v Cheadle Hulme, Old Waconians v Cheadle, Stockport v Hulmeians. National girls schools championship (at Milton Keynes, 11.30)

MOTOR RALLYING: Welsh Rally.

ROWING: Cambridge v Imperial College, London (Tideway)

SPEEDWAY: Speedway Star Cup: Coventry v Swindon (7.30)

SWIMMING: British grand prix meeting (at Cardiff).

TABLE TENNIS: English championships (at Brighton)

VOLLEYBALL: National League: Men: First division: Malory Lewisham v City of Stoke (12.0); Malory Lewisham v Sportsel Whitefield (2.30); Reebok Liverpool City v Warwick Riga (5.30), Leeds v Tooting Aquila (2.30); Crofton Sportswearhouse v City of Stoke (3.0), Wessex v Polonia Ealing (6.30) Women: First division: Sheffield Wednesday v Loughborough (2.30), Leeds v Britannia Music City (2.30)

TOMORROW

RUGBY LEAGUE

Stones Super League

Leeds v Oldham (3.0)
London v St Helens (6.35)
Salford v Castleford (3.0)
Sheffield v Paris (3.15)
Wigan v Halifax (3.0)

First division

Featherstone v Swinton (3.30)
Huddersfield v Keighley (3.30)
Hull v Widnes (3.15)
Wakefield v Whitehaven (3.30)

Second division

Carlisle v York (3.0)
Hunslet v Leigh (3.30)
Prescot v Doncaster (3.0)
Rochdale v Lancashire Lynx (3.0)

RUGBY UNION

Courage Clubs Championship
Second division

Newcastle v Nottingham (3.0)

Fourth division south

Camberley v Charlton Park (3.0)

Welsh League
First division

Ebbw Vale v Dunvant (2.30)

Anglo-Welsh competition
Group D

Bonymaen v Rotherham (2.30)

HOCKEY

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Surbiton v Old Loughtonians (at Sugden Road, 2.30). First division: Stourport v Oxford Hawks (at Kidderminster School, 2.30)

AEWHA CUP: Fifth round: Chelmsford v Canterbury (12.45), Crimson Ramblers v Aldridge (2.0); Doncaster v Woking (2.0); Hightown v Trojans (12.30) Ipswich v Olton (12.0). Slough v Leicester (12.0); Sutton Canada Life v Cheam (11.30), Wimbledon v Clifton (1.0)

AEWHA PLATE: Fourth round: Chiltern v Harrow; City of Portsmouth v Camberley; Deeside Ramblers v Reading; Driffield v Aldershot and Farnham; Leominster v Yate and South Gloucs, Poynton v Springfield; Sevenoaks v York, St Ives (Cambridgeshire) v Bath.

HOME NATIONS YOUTH TOURNAMENT: Under-16: Wales v Scotland (9.30), England v Ireland (11.30) Under-18: Scotland v Wales (1.30), England v Ireland (3.30) (all at Milton Keynes)

OTHER SPORT

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: BCAFL Championship Game: College Bowl XI: Loughborough Aces v Taranau Aberystwyth (at Saffron Lane Stadium, Leicester 1.30)

BASKETBALL: Budweiser League: Birmingham v London (7.0); Chester v Sheffield (6.0), Crystal Palace v Worthing (7.0). National League: Men: First division: Mid Sussex v Westminster (3.0) Ware v Oxford (4.0). Second division: Derby v Slough (6.30); Sheffield v Northampton (4.0), Swindon v London (4.0) Women: First division: Sheffield v Northampton (2.0), Thames Valley v Rhondda (2.30) Second division: Play-offs: Semi-final: Liverpool v Tyne and Wear (1.0)

ICE HOCKEY: Superleague play-offs: Group A: Manchester v Ayr (6.0) Group B: Basingstoke v Sheffield (6.0)

LACROSSE: Shepherds Friendly Society League: Premier division: Heaton Mersey v Cheadle, Stockport v Boardman and Eccles. Lancashire Cup: Final: Heaton Mersey A v Old Waconians A. Stockport Cup: Final: Mellor A v Norbury

SPEEDWAY: Speedway Star Cup: Swindon v Coventry (6.0).

SWIMMING: British grand prix meeting (at Cardiff).

TABLE TENNIS: English championships (at Brighton).

VOLLEYBALL: National League: Women: First division: London Malory v Orpington (1.30); Reebok Liverpool City v Essex Estonians (12.45), Ashcombe Guildford v Smoke Free Birmingham (2.30), Manchester United Salford v Britannia Music City (2.15).

LINGFIELD PARK

THUNDERER

2.10 Hangover. 2.40 Eau De Cologne. 3.10 Buckland Lad. 3.45 Tickerty's Gift. 4.15 Amber Spark. 4.45 Ross Dancer. 5.15 Country House.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT (CHASE COURSE); SOFT (HURDLES) SIS

2.10 RUBY CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS SELLING HANDICAP CHASE (£2,245: 2m 4f 110yd) (6 runners)

1 P61F OPAL'S TENSPOT 11 (F,G,S) J Bradley 10-11-10 L Aspell
2 3P53 HANGOVER 18 (G,S) R Lee 11-11-6 P Henley
3 5066 MADAM ROSE 28 J Mullins 7-10-12 David Turner (7)
4 -565 FATTASH 201 (B) P Mooney 5-10-12 S Ryan
5 4/1- RISEUPWILLIEREILLY 313P (B) D Bassett 11-10-12 W Greatrex (7)
6 0465 FULL SHILLING 17 (B) D Williams 8-10-12 D J Kavanagh

Evens Opal's Tenspot, 2-1 Hangover, 8-1 Riseupwilliereilly, 10-1 Full Shilling, 12-1 Madam Rose, 20-1 Fattash

2.40 GUILD VENTURE DIAMOND NOVICES HURDLE (£3,401: 2m 3f 110yd) (10)

1 2131 SPLENDID THYNE 15 (C,S) T Casey 5-12-0 M A Fitzgerald
2 46P CHARLIE'S FOLLY 31 B De Haan 6-11-2 G Upton
3 02 CHEEKY CHARLIE 12 J Ffitch-Heyes 5-11-2 P Henley (3)
4 F/2- COOL SPOT 488 G Enright 9-11-2 J R Kavanagh
5 32 EAU DE COLOGNE 31 Mrs L Richards 5-11-2 M Richards
6 0-PP SUPREME CRUSADER B W McKenzie-Coles 6-11-2 E Byrne
7 0 TORAJA 16 N Chance 5-11-2 D Leahy
8 12 CHEERFUL ASPECT 14 (CD,BF,S) T Forster 4-10-13 N Williamson
9 251 ELA AGAPI MOU 4 (6) G L Moore 4-10-13 P Holley
10 223 ALL DONE 14 S Mellor 4-10-2 N Mann

2-1 Cheerful Aspect, 9-4 Splendid Thyne, 7-1 Cheeky Charlie, Ela Agapi Mou, 10-1 Eau De Cologne, 12-1 Cool Spot, All Done, 20-1 others.

3.10 NORTHERN TRUST SAPPHIRE HANDICAP CHASE (£3,052: 2m) (5)

1 -124 RIVER LEVEN 50 (B,D,G,S) D Gandolfo 8-11-10 N Williamson
2 4654 RED BEAN 24 (D,G,S) K Vincent 9-11-6 M A Fitzgerald
3 2-31 BUCKLAND LAD 24 (D,F,S) D Grissell 6-11-0 J R Kavanagh
4 -1323 FICHU 88 (CD,BF,F,S) Mrs L Richards 9-10-11 M Richards
5 542P COPPER CABLE 63 C Smith 10-10-3 M Ranger

5-4 Buckland Lad, 3-1 River Leven, 9-2 Red Bean, 5-1 Fichu, 12-1 Copper Cable

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: C Weedon, 7 winners from 16 runners, 43.8%; R Lee, 8 from 24, 33.3%; J Old, 8 from 26, 30.8%; N Twiston-Davies, 7 from 30, 23.3%; G L Moore, 6 from 26, 23.1%; T Forster, 4 from 20, 20.0%.

JOCKEYS: S Ryan, 4 winners from 11 rides, 36.4%; D Leahy, 3 from 13, 23.1%; M A Fitzgerald, 7 from 31, 22.6%; P Hide, 6 from 28, 21.4%; N Williamson, 7 from 38, 18.4%; J R Kavanagh, 5 from 34, 14.7%

3.45 TJH GROUP LINGFIELD GOLD CUP HANDICAP HURDLE (£4,442: 2m 3f 110yd) (5)

1 4313 TICKERTY'S GIFT 31 (CD,BF,S) G L Moore 7-11-13 M Batchelor (7)
2 -0F4 SPRING TO GLORY 22 (D,F,G) P Hayward 10-11-4 M A Fitzgerald
3 1312 SPRINTFAYRE 86 (G,S) J Long 9-11-2 A Irvine (7)
4 -22P RACHAEL'S OWEN 36 (F,G) C Weedon 7-10-8 M Richards
5 B01P EQUITY'S DARLING 31 (B,CD,S) D O'Brien 5-10-0 P Hide

11-8 Tickerty's Gift, 11-4 Sprintfayre, 9-2 Rachael's Owen, 7-1 Spring To Glory, 10-1 Equity's Darling.

4.15 OPAL MAIDEN CHASE (£2,947: 2m 4f 110yd) (7)

1 F338 AMBER SPARK 8 (BF) D Gandolfo 8-11-10 N Williamson
2 DEBONAIR DUDE N Henderson 7-11-10 M A Fitzgerald
3 3-32 NORMARANGE 15 (BF) D Grissell 7-11-10 P Henley (3)
4 -PUS ONEOFUS 26 (F) Mrs L Richards 8-11-10 M Richards
5 1-4P PLUMBRIDGE 15 (G) P Chamings 9-11-10 J R Kavanagh
6 00F- ROMALITO 308F M Blanshard 7-11-10 P Hide
7 0UFP THE WAYWARD BISHOP 35 D Sherwood 8-11-10 J A McCarthy

7-4 Normarange, 9-4 Amber Spark, 3-1 Debonair Dude, 12-1 Oneofus, Romalito, 16-1 Plumbridge, 33-1 The Wayward Bishop

4.45 HBLB BULL INFORMATION SYSTEMS LTD NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,443: 2m 7f) (12)

1 4031 MILLMOUNT 24 (B,S) T McGovern 7-12-0 M Batchelor (7)
2 0-51 RED LIGHTER 18 (S) J Old 8-11-8 G Upton
3 4634 SHANAGORE WARRIOR 31 (BF) S Mellor 5-11-7 N Mann
4 F/40 STORMY SESSION 21 N Twiston-Davies 7-11-7 C Maude
5 5305 ROSS DANCER 9 J Moore 5-11-7 J Magee (3)
6 -20P NORDIC SPREE 26 G L Moore 5-11-5 P Holley
7 P331 ROSKEEN BRIDGE 15 (S) C Weedon 6-10-12 M Richards
8 F000 THAT OLD FEELING 42 (B) J White 5-10-1 D Gallagher
9 15 SUPREME ILLUSION 8 (S) John Berry 4-10-0 N Williamson
10 FPU0 UPHAM RASCAL 46 D Gandolfo 6-10-0 D Leahy
11 6655 EWAR BOLD 12 (B) K Cunningham-Brown 4-10-0 J R Kavanagh
12 211- WORKINGFORPEANUTS 340P (F,S) C Smith 7-10-0 Mrs D Smith

11-4 Red Lighter, 4-1 Millmount, 9-2 Roskeen Bridge, 8-1 Nordic Spree, 10-1 Stormy Session, 12-1 Ewar Bold, Shanagore Warrior, 14-1 others

5.15 EMERALD INTERMEDIATE OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (£1,203: 2m 110yd) (8)

1 30 BIG STAN'S BOY 98 C Brooks 6-11-2 D Gallagher
2 0 EXPRESS AGAIN 7 M Haynes 5-11-2 N Williamson
3 R-0 MR ROBSTEE 86 A Chamberlain 6-11-2 O Burrows (5)
4 5 PEACE INITIATIVE 84 K Vincent 5-11-2 M A Fitzgerald
5 COUNTRY HOUSE J Old 6-10-11 G Upton
6 63 QUISTAQUAY 50 J Mullins 5-10-11 P Henley (3)
7 WHISKY WILMA R Curtis 5-10-11 D Morris
8 DUNSFOLD DOLLY P Winkworth 4-10-3 L Aspell (3)

5-4 Country House, 3-1 Quistaquay, 5-1 Big Stan's Boy, 8-1 Whisky Wilma, 10-1 Express Again, 16-1 Peace Initiative, 20-1 others.

WOLVERHAMPTON

THUNDERER

7.00 Big Bang. 7.30 English Invader. 8.00 Noufari. 8.30 Komasta. 9.00 Lochon. 9.30 Sweet Supposin.

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 8.30 Cold Steel.

GOING: STANDARD DRAW: NO ADVANTAGE SIS

7.00 BURNS MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (£2,580: 1m 1f 79yd) (8 runners)

1 -010 RINUS MAGIC 10 E Alston 4-9-10 K Fallon 3
2 -330 HAZEL 51 (B) Mrs G Kelleway 5-9-5 D Holland 6
3 5-03 SOUNDS LEGAL 18 P Evans 4-9-5 J F Egan 5
4 60-3 BIG BANG 17 M Blanshard 3-8-5 J Quinn 4
5 00- BONANZA D'OR 144 G Ham 3-8-5 S Drowne 7
6 -242 ZORBA 24 (BF) C Thornton 3-8-5 D McKeown 2
7 45 CRACKERBOX 14 H Akbary 3-8-0 R French (7) 1
8 6334 WINDBORN 14 C Allen 3-8-0 Martin Dwyer (3) 8

8-11 Zorba, 7-2 Windborn, 6-1 Crackerbox, Big Bang, 10-1 Sounds Legal, 16-1 Hazel, 50-1 others.

7.30 CHORISTER CLAIMING STAKES (£2,580: 1m 4f) (10)

1 0325 DR EDGAR 25 (F,G) M Dods 5-9-4 A Clark 1
2 SOMMERSBY 119 (G) Mrs N Macauley 6-9-2 J Quinn 5
3 -140 FRESH FRUIT DAILY 26 (G) P Kelleway 5-9-1 Angela Gallimore (7) 8
4 1341 ENGLISH INVADER 11 (D,G,S) C Dwyer 6-9-0 K Fallon 3
5 -004 CARROLLS MARC 23 (C,D,F,G) C Murray 5-8-8 P McCabe (3) 7
6 000- ELLY FLEETFOOT 178 (G) G L Moore 5-8-8 S Whitworth 4
7 6363 HONESTLY 18 (C,G) B Smart 4-8-5 R Perham 2
8 5531 LAHIK 18 K Ivory 4-8-4 Martin Dwyer (3) 6
9 -40-1 IN THE BAND 18 (V) Lord Huntingdon 4-8-3 Dale Gibson 10
10 0065 EFFICACIOUS 10 (B) P Eccles 4-7-13 J Bramhill (5) 8

5-4 English Invader, 9-2 Honestly, 6-1 In The Band, 7-1 Dr Edgar, 8-1 Fresh Fruit Daily, 10-1 Lahik, 12-1 others.

8.00 HARTSHORNE MOTOR COMPANY LIMITED STAKES (£2,580: 2m 46yd) (6)

1 NOUFARI 59 (G) R Hollinshead 6-9-2 F Lynch (3) 6
2 344- PARADISE NAVY 106 (B,D,F,G) C Egerton 8-9-2 Sophie Mitchell (5) 4
3 500- SECRET SERVICE 143 (F) C Thornton 5-9-2 D McKeown 5
4 -405 MONTECRISTO 10 (F,G) P Guest 4-8-11 Dane O'Neill 1
5 5222 RANDOM KINDNESS 30 (BF) R Ingram 4-8-11 S Whitworth 3
6 3-60 STATE APPROVAL 59 (C,F,G) P Eccles 4-8-11 J Bramhill (5) 2

9-4 Secret Service, 5-2 Paradise Navy, 11-4 Noufari, 4-1 Random Kindness, 12-1 State Approval, 14-1 Montecristo

8.30 CHESTERS HANDICAP (3-Y-O: £3,483: 7f) (7)

1 21-0 CEE-N-K 10 (G) M Johnston 9-7 D Holland 2
2 6-1 COLD STEEL 56 (CD,G) W Jarvis 9-6 W Ryan 7
3 5121 ENCHANTING EVE 14 (C,D,G) C Allen 8-13 Martin Dwyer (3) 3
4 1-20 KOMASTA 59 (CD,G) J Wilson 8-8 K Fallon 5
5 56-6 TINKERBELL 10 (V,CD,G) W Muir 8-6 Dane O'Neill 4
6 2212 HEVER GOLF CHARGER 18 (D,G) T Naughton 8-4 T Sprake 1
7 3-30 PATOIA 65 R Hollinshead 7-12 J Quinn 6

2-1 Cold Steel, 4-1 Enchanting Eve, 9-2 Hever Golf Charger, 6-1 Tinkerbell, 7-1 Patoia, 8-1 Cee-N-K, 16-1 Komasta

9.00 WHITE HEAD SELLING STAKES (£2,580: 6f) (13)

1 6010 LITTLE IBNR 10 (CD,F,G) P Evans 6-9-10 J F Egan 6
2 KOD- HANNAH'S USHER 735 (CD,F,G) C Murray 5-9-8 Nicola Howarth 12
3 2501 BOLD ARISTOCRAT 19 (D,G) R Hollinshead 6-9-4 F Lynch (3) 7
4 4001 SHONTAINE 2 (D,F,G) M Johnston 4-9-2 (6ex) D Holland 4
5 34-0 NIGHT HARMONY 24 (V) Miss S Wilton 4-8-13 S Whitworth 2
6 2552 HOH MAJESTIC 19 (V,BF,F,G) Ronald Thompson 4-8-10 J Bramhill (5) 13
7 6020 FEATHERSTONE LANE 10 (V,C,F,G) Miss L Siddall 6-8-8 O R McCabe 5
8 -140 AMY LEIGH 38 (B,C,G) J Wilson 4-8-6 K Fallon 11
9 -003 LOCHON 10 (V,D,F,G) Mrs N Macauley 6-8-5 Jo Hunnam (7) 10
10 0-03 DICTATION 19 J J O'Neill 5-8-3 J Quinn 1
11 6-56 APPEAL AGAIN 43 D Burchell 4-7-11 N Carlisle 8
12 00-0 NITEOWL RAIDER 19 (CD,G) John A Harris 4-7-10 J O'Reilly 3
13 -546 MARGARETROSE ANNA 18 B Baugh 5-7-10 Iona Wands (7) 9

9-2 Hoh Majestic, 5-1 Bold Aristocrat, 7-1 Little Ibnr, 8-1 Margaretrose Anna, Lochon, 10-1 Hannah's Usher, 12-1 others.

9.30 TOMS HANDICAP (£2,580: 1m 1f 79yd) (13)

1 210- ANGEL FACE 74 (C) P Evans 4-10-0 J F Egan 7
2 00-4 ETHBAAT 11 (F,G) (C) M Heaton-Ellis 6-9-12 A Clark 11
3 40/4 VENICE BEACH 10 C Brooks 5-9-10 J D Smith (3) 12
4 0123 CHADLEIGH LANE 15 (C,G) A Mulholland 5-9-10 D McKeown 13
5 3105 SWEET SUPPOSIN 11 (V,CD,G) C Dwyer 6-9-9 Jo Hunnam (7) 6
6 0431 SUGA HAWK 14 (CD,G) E Alston 5-9-7 K Fallon 8
7 0-23 DRAGONJOY 14 (V,C,BF,G) N Littmoden 4-9-3 D Griffiths (5) 5
8 2-00 OBELOS 24 (V,F) Miss S Wilton 6-9-3 S Whitworth 1
9 0-36 GOLDEN TOUCH 52 (C,D,F,G) D Cosgrove 5-9-3 M Rimmer 3
10 5-04 RIVAL BID 14 (V,CD,F,G,S) Mrs N Macauley 9-9-1 J Quinn 9
11 1000 LOCH STYLE 22 (C,F,G) R Hollinshead 4-8-12 F Lynch (3) 10
12 -201 HEVER GOLF EAGLE 18 (G) T Naughton 4-8-9 Dane O'Neill 2
13 400- BACKHANDER 183 R Phillips 5-8-6 S Drowne 4

9-2 Suga Hawk, 6-1 Chadleigh Lane, 8-1 Ethbaat, Hever Golf Eagle, 10-1 Dragonjoy, Sweet Supposin, 12-1 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: W Jarvis, 8 winners from 22 runners, 36.4%; R Ingram, 6 from 22, 27.3%; M Johnston, 46 from 202, 22.8%; Lord Huntingdon, 18 from 83, 21.7%; R Guest, 8 from 41, 19.5%; B Smart, 6 from 32, 18.8%.

JOCKEYS: M Rimmer, 6 winners from 29 rides, 20.7%; M Dwyer, 4 from 22, 18.2%; J O'Reilly, 3 from 17, 17.6%; W Ryan, 5 from 29, 17.2%; Dane O'Neill, 6 from 36, 16.7%; D Holland, 12 from 85, 14.1%.

Blinkered first time

HEREFORD: 2.30 Salt Here. 3.25 Menelave. 5.30 Kentucky Gold. LINGFIELD PARK: 4.45 Ewar Bold. NEWCASTLE: 2.15 Paparazzo. UTTOXETER: 3.00 Corr. D'Estruval, Garrylough. WOLVERHAMPTON: 9.00 Night Harmony.

THE TIMES GUIDE TO THE PREMIERSHIP THIS WEEKEND

ARSENAL

Nicolas Anelka, the French boy wonder, will not, after all, make his debut for Arsenal at Southampton; his ankle is still troubling him. With Merson out and Wright suspended yet again, it could be a rare chance for the promising Paul Shaw to join Dennis Bergkamp up front, but Ray Parlour should return. Lee Harper will make his debut in goal after John Lukic was ruled out with a poisoned toe. Vince Bartram returns from loan at Wolverhampton Wanderers to sit on the bench. **BG**

ASTON VILLA

Villa's erratic form this season, ranging from pretty good to rank bad, is endangering their chances of securing a coveted Uefa Cup place, the only target left open to them. Mark Draper, the midfield player, is as mystified as most by the lack of consistency but still reckons Villa can qualify for Europe again. "It's difficult to know what the reasons are," he said. "Perhaps it shows the nature of the Premiership, with so little to choose between the sides. There's time, though. No need to panic yet." **RK**

BLACKBURN ROVERS

The errant players who were asked to leave a VIP lounge at Cheltenham racecourse on Thursday will escape censure from Blackburn, who see it as a minor incident. "The players were not asked to leave the course, which showed that it was not a serious incident, and there will be no internal inquiry," a club statement read. Chris Sutton was named as being at the races when he was in Blackburn, receiving treatment for a glandular problem which rules him out of the match today. **DM**

CHELSEA

Chelsea's defence without Franck Leboeuf tends to ship water, as we saw on Wednesday at Upton Park, and the France international seems sure to be missing again. So will Ruud Gullit, who is out for the rest of the season with an ankle injury. But Roberto Di Matteo, who sat out the West Ham game, will surely return and Mark Hughes, who scored as substitute, will start. This means no place for Gianluca Vialli, who took his goal well on Wednesday, but seemed below his best. **BG**

COVENTRY CITY

Amid the gathering gloom at Highfield Road, Darren Huckerby shines like a beacon. Since he was allowed to depart Newcastle United in November — one of Kevin Keegan's last, and probably most foolish, acts — his pace, power and seven-goal haul have provided Coventry with a glimpse of hope. Tomorrow, he returns to St James' Park. "All I ever wanted was to be given a chance to show what I could do," he said. "I have no regrets about leaving. It's great playing first-team football." **DM**

DERBY COUNTY

Every season it seems that a side apparently safe for most of the campaign suddenly falls into relegation trouble. Derby are just four points away from the bottom three after conceding ten goals in their previous two away games. They face a struggling Everton at Goodison Park this afternoon. Igor Stimac has a knee injury and Dean Sturridge is suspended. "We have four more away games and are looking for at least three points from them," Jim Smith, the manager, said. **RH**

EVERTON

Everton continue to walk a fine line with injuries as the transfer deadline looms. "We've got a couple of weeks to do something," Joe Royle, the manager, said. "We do want to add a squad player or two, because if we had any more injuries we would be struggling." Terry Phelan and Paul Gerrard return, with Southall returning to the bench, but Joe Parkinson and Claus Thomsen are doubtful. Michael Ball, Richard Dunne and Graham Allen come into the squad. **FB**

LEEDS UNITED

It is unlikely, but Leeds are beginning to talk about a Uefa Cup place. "If we can sneak up a couple more places and teams above us win the cup competitions, you never know," Lee Sharpe said this week. Brian Deane may be going into Europe anyway — Marseilles and Le Havre are both reportedly interested. Leeds have made an offer of a three-year, £500,000 contract. After 11 months out with a knee injury John Pemberton is hoping to return next week. **PB**

LEICESTER CITY

With Matt Elliott, Ian Marshall and Steve Guppy all ineligible for the Coca-Cola Cup final the game against Middlesbrough, their Wembley opponents, today is not quite the dress rehearsal it appears. All three will feature today while Kevin Poole deputises for Kasey Keller, who plays for the United States against Canada tomorrow. Victory will take Leicester to the 42-point mark originally targeted by Martin O'Neill, the manager, to avoid relegation. **RH**

LIVERPOOL

It is hard to comprehend that only a lenient referee prevented Steve McManaman from being suspended this week. The Liverpool forward was booked on Monday and the usual three points for the offence would have taken him through the 21-point disciplinary barrier. But David Elleray deemed his retaliation against David Batty worthy of only a two-point caution. Liverpool will be unchanged as they look for a victory that will keep the pressure on Manchester United. **DM**

MANCHESTER UNITED

Roy Keane completes his two-match suspension today. Otherwise, with Nicky Butt and Paul Scholes getting a clean bill of health, and Pallister and Giggs back after missing the Sunderland debacle, Alex Ferguson has a full squad to pick from for the first time this season. "It's going to be a nightmare picking a team," he confessed yesterday. Butt, who has not played since January 1, seems certain to be among the substitutes and likely to be involved, with an eye to FC Porto next Wednesday. **PB**

MIDDLESBROUGH

The players drank champagne after the 1-0 home defeat on Wednesday to Stockport County (they staggered into the Coca-Cola Cup final 2-1 on aggregate), but the memory will seem rather flat if they lose at Leicester today. Middlesbrough have taken just two points from their past ten away games. In order to be safe they probably need to win their remaining five home games and trust that George Carman, QC can retrieve the three points deducted by the Premier League.

NEWCASTLE UNITED

There has been tension at St James' Park this week between Kenny Dalglish, the manager, and Les Ferdinand and David Ginola. Ginola does not see eye to eye with his manager and will leave at the end of the season. But Ferdinand, too, is in trouble. Having come on at half-time at Anfield last Monday he limped off ten minutes later. "Les thought he was fit, we didn't and we were obviously right," Dalglish fumed. Ferdinand is now doubtful for the Uefa Cup game in Monaco next week. **DM**

NOTTINGHAM FOREST

Ian Moore is likely to begin his Forest career as a substitute against Liverpool this afternoon after his £1 million transfer from Tranmere Rovers. Dave Bassett, the general manager, has described the 20-year-old as one for the future. In contrast, Bryan Roy appears to have his best days at the club behind him. He was fortunate to avoid a fine after showing dissent at his substitution at Blackburn on Tuesday and has been told to decide whether he intends to stay or leave. **RH**

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

Wednesday may still be feeling the pain of the FA Cup quarter-final defeat on Sunday, but at least they have found someone to help to ease aching limbs. The Owls have appointed Hilary Barber, a massage therapist. "Hilary will be dedicated to maintaining the physical wellbeing of Wednesday's on-field personnel," a club statement explained. David Hirst has already received help from the masseur, and is hoping to be fit enough to face Manchester United, who were once interested in signing him. **DM**

SUNDERLAND

After the morale-boosting victory over Manchester United last Saturday, the consensus is that Peter Reid's side are within three wins of safety and they visit Chelsea tomorrow aiming to repeat the 3-0 victory at Roker Park in December. But his players have scored only ten times on their league travels this season, collecting just two points from their past seven away games. Reid, has rebuffed rumours that he and his assistant, Paul Bracewell, will replace Joe Royle at Everton this summer.

HOW THEY STAND

	P	Pts	Goal diff	Last five lge games
1 Manchester United	29	57	+24	WWDWL
2 Liverpool	29	54	+26	WWDLW
3 Arsenal	30	54	+23	DLLWW
4 Newcastle	28	48	+19	WWWLL
5 Sheffield Wednesday	29	48	+6	DWWWW
6 Aston Villa	29	46	+8	WWDWL
7 Wimbledon	27	44	+7	DWDLD
8 Chelsea	28	43	+3	WDLDL
9 Leeds	30	40	-7	LWWWD
10 Leicester	28	37	-5	LWWWD
11 Tottenham	28	35	-4	LDLWL
12 Blackburn	28	33	+2	WDWDD
13 Everton*	29	33	-7	WDLDL
14 Derby	29	32	-13	WDLWL
15 Sunderland	30	32	-15	LLLWL
16 Coventry	30	30	-18	LDLDD
17 West Ham	28	28	-12	LLWLW
18 Nottingham Forest	30	28	-21	DWLLD
19 Southampton	28	26	-9	LDWDD
20 Middlesbrough	27	22	-12	WDLLW

* Middlesbrough deducted three points

SOUTHAMPTON

The 0-0 draw at Leeds ended Southampton's unusual record of having scored one goal in every away Premiership game this season. Despite dropping one place, Graeme Souness, the manager, pronounced himself pleased with the point, and the third clean sheet in four games. Robbie Slater is available after international duty with Australia, but Jason Dodd, recently returned after two months away, is missing again with a knee injury. Van Gobbel completes a suspension. **NS**

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

When John Scales left Liverpool last year, he was about to join Leeds until Tottenham spirited him away at the eleventh hour, causing much gnashing of teeth at Elland Road. Today, when Leeds visit White Hart Lane, he will discover if any bitterness lingers. "I still don't feel I let them down," he said. "No decision can be made in two hours, which I think was expected of me, but that's all in the past now." Or is it? The quiet, charming and undemonstrative Leeds fans may beg to differ. **RK**

WEST HAM UNITED

Having taken three points out of 27 on their travels, West Ham begin three successive matches on the road by visiting Villa Park. Relegation threatens unless there is an improvement, but can they get away with it? Mark Bowen, their defender, insists they can. "I can't see any problems," he said. "We will get out of trouble. We are a quality team." Bowen, though, will not be around to help. He has agreed to follow Tony Cottee to the Far East after agreeing a move to Japan. **KP**

WIMBLEDON

If the Wimbledon players were downhearted by their failure to reach the Coca-Cola Cup final, it did not show on the training ground. Robbie Earle kept an appointment to train young players, while most of the first-team squad took only one day off instead of the two that they were offered. Paul Heald, the second-choice goalkeeper, had his gloves thoroughly warmed, after spending most of Tuesday evening using them to dry the match ball ready for Vinny Jones's long throw-ins. **NS**

Reports: Brian Glanville, Peter Ball, Russell Kempson, Richard Hobson, Nick Szczepanik, Keith Pike, David Maddock. Statistics: Julian Desborough

ASTON VILLA v WEST HAM UNITED

TICKETS: Seats available

10-YEAR RECORD: 4-0, —, 0-1, —, —, 3-1, —, 3-1, 0-2, 1-1.

HOW THEY LINE UP

ASTON VILLA (probable): M Bosnich, F Nelson, A Wright, U Ehiogu, D Hughes, G Southgate, A Townsend, I Taylor, M Draper, D Yorke, S Milosevic.

WEST HAM UNITED (from): L Miklosko, L Sealey, T Breacker, J Dicks, S Bilic, M Rieper, R Ferdinand, K Rowland, I Bishop, J Moncur, F Lampard, S Lazaridis, S Potts, I Dowie, J Hartson, P Kitson, H Porfirio, S Mean.

BLACKBURN ROVERS v WIMBLEDON

TICKETS: Seats available

10-YEAR RECORD: —, —, —, —, —, —, 0-0, 3-0, 2-1, 3-2.

HOW THEY LINE UP

BLACKBURN ROVERS (from): T Flowers, J Kenna, T Sherwood, C Hendry, G Le Saux, K Gallacher, J Wilcox, P Pedersen, W McKinlay, H Berg, G Flitcroft, L Bohinen, N Marker, P Warhurst, D Duff, I Pearce, G Donis, S Given.

WIMBLEDON (from): N Sullivan, K Cunningham, A Kimble, V Jones, C Perry, D Blackwell, R Earle, O Leonhardsen, E Ekoku, M Gayle, N Ardley, M Harford, D Holdsworth, P Fear, B McAllister, P Heald.

EVERTON v DERBY COUNTY

TICKETS: Seats available

10-YEAR RECORD: —, 3-0, 1-0, 2-1, 2-0, —, —, —, —, —

HOW THEY LINE UP

EVERTON (from): N Southall, E Barrett, D Unsworth, D Watson, T Phelan, G Stuart, P Rideout, D Ferguson, N Barmby, P Gerrard, C Thomsen, J Parkinson, M Hottiger, C Short, M Branch, M Ball, G Allen, R Dunne.

DERBY COUNTY (from): M Taylor, G Rowett, P McGrath, C Dailly, I Stimac, J Laursen, L Carsley, S Flynn, D Powell, C Powell, A Asanovic, P Trollope, R Willems, A Ward, P Simpson, M Gabbiadini, R Hoult, K Cooper.

LEICESTER CITY v MIDDLESBROUGH

TICKETS: Seats available

10-YEAR RECORD: —, 0-0, —, 2-1, 4-3, 2-1, —, 2-0, —, —.

HOW THEY LINE UP

LEICESTER CITY (from): K Poole, S Grayson, J Watts, S Walsh, S Prior, M Elliott, S Guppy, J Lawrence, M Izzet, N Lennon, G Parker, S Taylor, S Campbell, S Wilson, I Marshall, M Robins, E Heskey, S Claridge, P Hyde.

MIDDLESBROUGH (from): M Schwarzer, N Cox, N Pearson, G Festa, C Fleming, C Hignett, P Stamp, Emerson, A Moore, C Blackmore, Juninho, F Ravanelli, S Vickers, M Summerbell, B Roberts.

MANCHESTER UNITED v SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 3-1, 4-1, 1-1, 0-0, —, 1-1, 2-1, 5-0, 1-0, 2-2

HOW THEY LINE UP

MANCHESTER UNITED (from): P Schmeichel, G Neville, D May, G Pallister, R Johnsen, D Irwin, D Beckham, N Butt, R Giggs, E Cantona, A Cole, O G Solskjaer, K Poborsky, B McClair, P Scholes, R van der Gouw.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (from). K Pressman, I Nolan, L Briscoe, D Walker, D Stefanovic, R Blinker, O Trustfull, S Oakes, P Atherton, G Whittingham, S Nicol, B Carbone, A Booth, D Hirst, R Humphreys, M Williams, M Clarke.

NEWCASTLE UNITED v COVENTRY CITY

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 1-2, 2-2, 0-3, —, —, —, —, 4-0, 4-0, 3-0.

HOW THEY LINE UP

NEWCASTLE UNITED (from): S Hislop, W Barton, J Beresford, D Batty, D Peacock, R Lee, P Beardsley, F Asprilla, R Elliott, D Ginola, K Gillespie, S Watson, L Clark, P Albert, J Crawford.

COVENTRY CITY (from): S Ogrizovic, P Telfer, G Breen, D Dublin, A Evtushok, M Hall, K Richardson, G McAllister, P Ndlovu, D Huckerby, E Jess, W Boland, B Borrows, A Ducros, D Burrows, J Filan

NOTTINGHAM FOREST v LIVERPOOL

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 2-1, 2-1, 2-2, 2-1, 1-1, 1-0, —, 1-1, 1-0.

HOW THEY LINE UP

NOTTINGHAM FOREST (from): M Crossley, A Fettis, D Lyttle, A I Haaland, C Cooper, N Jerkan, S Chettle, S Pearce, D Phillips, C Bart-Williams, S Gemmill, C Allen, I Woan, K Campbell, D Saunders, P McGregor, B Roy, S Blatherwick, S Guinan, P van Hooijdonk.

LIVERPOOL (from): D James, J McAteer, S I Bjornebye, M Wright, D Matteo, B T Kvarme, S McManaman, J Barnes, J Redknapp, R Fowler, P Berger, S Collymore, P Babb, S Harkness, N Ruddock, R Jones, A Warner.

SOUTHAMPTON v ARSENAL

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: 0-4, 4-2, 1-3, 1-0, 1-1, 0-4, 2-0, 0-4, 1-0, 0-0.

HOW THEY LINE UP

SOUTHAMPTON (from): M Taylor, A Neilson, S Charlton, C Lundekvam, R Dryden; J Magilton, N Maddison, M Oakley, M Le Tissier, M Evans, E Ostenstad, R Slater, E Berkovic, F Benali, K Monkou, S Basham, D Beasant.

ARSENAL (from): L Harper, R Parlour, M Keown, A Adams, S Marshall, N Winterburn, P Vieira, S Hughes, D Platt, D Bergkamp, P Shaw, I Rankin, S Morrow, I Selley, M Rose, R Garde, V Bartram.

LEADING GOALSCORERS

20: A Shearer (Newcastle United). 18: I Wright (Arsenal). 15: R Fowler (Liverpool). 14: D Yorke (Aston Villa). 13: F Ravanelli (Middlesbrough), L Ferdinand (Newcastle United). 12: O G Solskjaer (Manchester United), M Le Tissier (Southampton). 10: D Bergkamp (Arsenal), C Sutton (Blackburn Rovers), S Collymore (Liverpool), E Ekoku (Wimbledon). 9: D Dublin (Coventry City), S Claridge (Leicester City).

CHAMPIONSHIP BETTING

1-2: Manchester United. 2-1: Liverpool. 12-1: Arsenal. 25-1: Newcastle United. 50-1: Chelsea. 66-1: Aston Villa. 80-1: Wimbledon. 150-1: Sheffield Wednesday. Odds supplied by Ladbrokes.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR v LEEDS UNITED

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: —, —, —, —, 0-0, 1-3, 4-0, 1-1, 1-1, 2-1.

HOW THEY LINE UP

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (from): I Walker, S Carr, D Austin, C Wilson, J Edinburgh, C Calderwood, J Scales, S Campbell, S Nethercott, D Anderton, J Dozzell, A Sinton, E Sheringham, R Rosenthal, S Iversen, J Clapham, R Allen, E Baardsen.

LEEDS UNITED (from): N Martyn, R Molenaar, D Wetherall, G Kelly, G Halle, L Radebe, C Palmer, L Bowyer, I Rush, L Sharpe, A Dorigo, B Deane, A Yeboah, T Harte, M Ford, M Jackson, M Beeney.

TOMORROW

CHELSEA v SUNDERLAND

TICKETS: Sold out

10-YEAR RECORD: —, —, 1-1, —, 3-2, —, —, —, —, —.

HOW THEY LINE UP

CHELSEA (from): N Colgan, F Grodas, P Parker, D Petrescu, E Johnson, S Minto, T Sinclair, S Clarke, A Myers, C Burley, J Morris, R Di Matteo, M Nicholls, D Wise, G Zola, G Vialli, M Hughes, P Hughes

SUNDERLAND (from): L Perez, G Hall, D Kubicki, R Ord, A Melville, D Kelly, P Bracewell, K Ball, M Gray, C Russell, M Bridges, P Stewart, J Mullin, J Eriksson, D Preece, D Williams, L Howey, K Hieselverg.

WHEN TO WATCH ON TELEVISION

TODAY

10.45pm BBC1 Match of the Day (highlights including Nottingham Forest v Liverpool)

TOMORROW

11am Sky Sports 1 Goals on Sunday

3pm Sky Sports 1 Chelsea v Sunderland (live)

The official Internet site of the FA Carling Premiership is at http://www.fa-carling.com/

FOOTBALL: CATWALK STROLLS ABANDONED IN QUEST FOR FAST ROUTE DOWN WEMBLEY WAY

Model goalkeeper poses a challenge

DAVID JAMES

THE FACE OF FOOTBALL

By David Maddock

When the controversy surrounding Matthew Le Tissier's inclusion in the England team against Italy finally calmed, the more astute analysts began to question another of Glenn Hoddle's selections for the World Cup qualifying game. Should the coach, they wondered, have chosen Ian Walker in goal?

A better alternative, given his Wembley experience, was David James. The Liverpool goalkeeper has consistently performed well this season and yet has still to take that final step off the bench at international level, even in the absence of David Seaman. At 26, James has emerged from some turbulent times to establish himself at Anfield. As a goalkeeper, many judges — Gordon Banks and Joe Corrigan among them — believe he rivals Seaman as the No 1 in the country.

England, James says, is his next great ambition, but he admits to a certain amount of frustration at not yet being offered an opportunity. "I really want to play for my country and every time I go there believing I can get in the side," he said.

"In a way, it is frustrating being behind David Seaman: you look at him and can't picture a better goalkeeper. He does everything so naturally, with no frills. But in other ways it is not so frustrating because he is a goalkeeper to learn from. There is nothing to say I can't be a better goalkeeper than him.

"When he missed the Italy game, I wanted to play, but it was a tough call for Mr Hoddle. He had his No 1 out and had to choose between three others. In the end, he went for Ian because he had been involved over the past 18 months and knew the team, which was fair enough."

James is, as his assessment of the England situation suggests, an articulate, intelligent man. His conversation is littered with phrases not automatically associated with the language of the dressing-room.

For instance, speaking about the time, early in his Anfield career, when he was out of the side and Tim Flowers was lined up as a replacement, he was faced, he said, with one of those defining moments in life. "Such moments are those times when destiny calls," he said. "It is a fact of life one has to deal with." Note "one", not "you".

There is a certain sophistication to David James, starting with his appearance. It helps that he has a physique of such impressive presence that the house of Armani came calling for his services. He briefly strolled the catwalks in their designer clothing, but now shies away from the suggestion that he can extend his modelling career. "It was fun and I just did a few days. That did not get in the way of my football," he said.

"We have ten games left and we are challenging for the title so I must put all my energies into that. If people say I wasn't taking football seriously enough by doing modelling, they were totally wrong, but I want to be seen as a serious professional and I think distractions like that are not such a good thing at this stage of my career."

If there is a common theme espoused by goalkeepers, then it is the idea that they should be perceived as serious footballers. Perhaps the cliché about them all being mad niggles away. Although James is at pains to stress his professionalism, there is little doubt that he has a certain fraying at the edges of his character that befits the common perception of his chosen trade.

His language, so expressive, sometimes careers off at puzzling tangents, as if he is sometimes thinking so fast that he finds it hard to get it all out. He admits that he is a self-critical character, constantly sifting through the fragments of his performance. Sometimes, as against Newcastle United last Monday, such eccentricity is brought onto the field.

By his own testimony, he was "terrible" in that match, a judgment not made easier by the presence of Hoddle. Ever the perfectionist, he claims to have identified problems in his mental build-up to the game and resolved them accordingly. He also believes that one bad game should not sway the England manager.

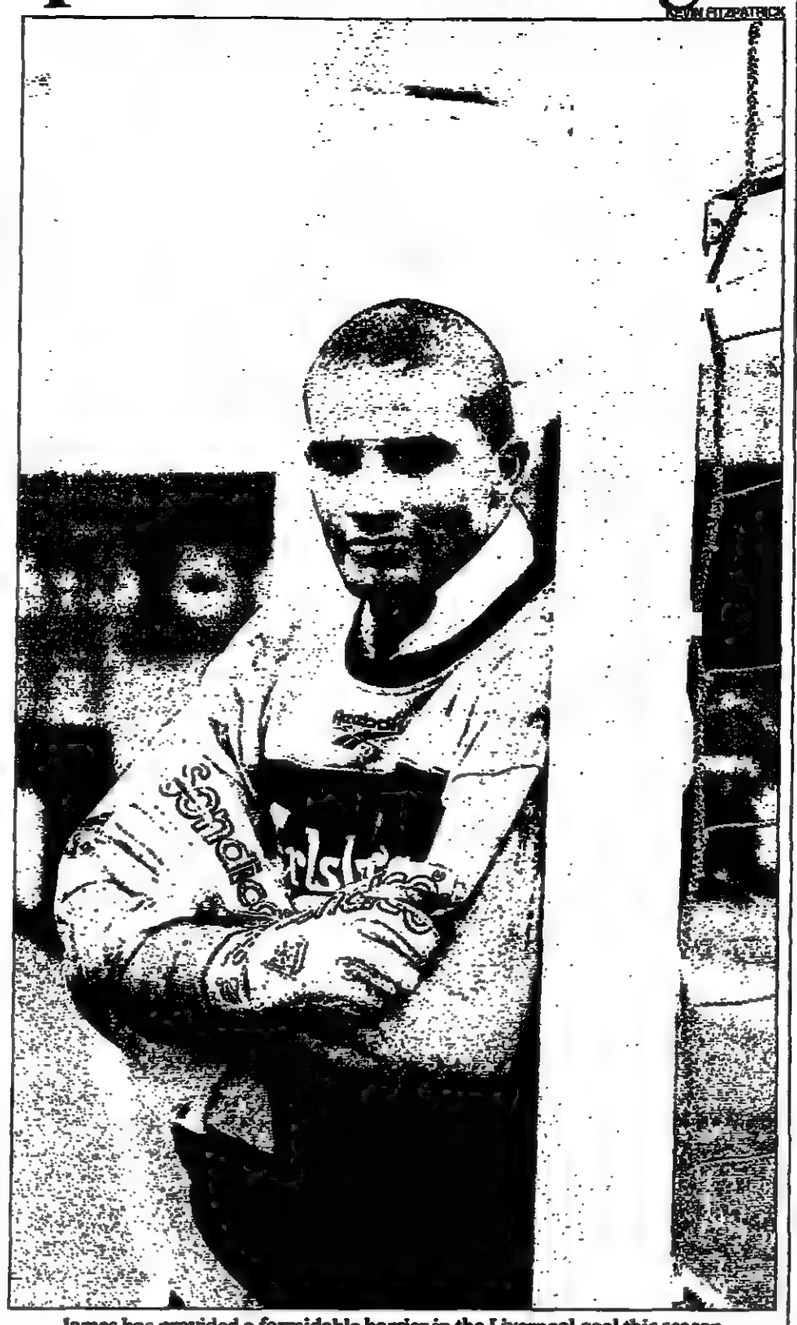
"Goalkeepers can make mistakes, but it is consistency that is the real test. They were the first goals I had let in at Anfield this year. If you are going to throw in three goals, then it is better to do it in a game when you score four.

"There has been talk of pressure now because of my performance and the forthcoming England game, but the only pressure I am under is self-induced pressure. I invariably criticise myself before anyone else can manage it."

It is easy to forget that he is only 26 and made most of his mistakes for Liverpool at an age when goalkeepers are usually learning their trade in the lesser teams. Now his consistency and ever-increasing maturity will surely bring him the one ambition he has yet to fulfill.

"I want to be like Peter Shilton, but I'll have to play until I'm 50 to beat his caps record," he said. "What isn't unrealistic is to be England's first black goalkeeper. I'm not saying it's a major political ambition, but I am aware of it and, if I can influence youngsters in any way, then I'm glad about that."

Game boy ban, page 1



KEVIN FITZPATRICK

James has provided a formidable barrier in the Liverpool goal this season

Ownership gives English clubs home advantage

ROB HUGHES

Weekend View

Italians are casting covetous eyes at English football. It is not that we have Zola and Ravanelli, Di Matteo and Vialli, because Juventus or AC Milan have wealth enough to buy them back any time they choose. Rather, it is the concept of an Englishman's home being his castle, the fact that leading clubs here own, and therefore can develop and market, the cornerstone of their wealth, the stadiums themselves.

In Italy this weekend, Juventus are closer than ever to pulling out of the Stadio Delle Alpi and moving to either Bologna or Reggio Emilia, almost four hours' drive away. The problems with Delle Alpi are that the stadium, built for the 1990 World Cup finals, was considered soulless from the very first. It was also seven miles from the centre of Turin and, from Gianni Agnelli, the club's patron, down, the new home comforts were despised. Perhaps Millwall supporters who preferred the shabbiness of Cold Blow Lane to the New Den, have an affinity with that.

The Juventus argument runs deeper. It is about money. Delle Alpi, council-owned, eats up £5 million per year in maintenance and Juventus have never been happy paying more than £2 million per season in rent and losing millions more in advertising revenue that goes to the city council. Likewise, Torino, the *Serie B* team who share the stadium, are disaffected with life in the white elephant up in the hills.

Local council elections are in the air, so there is much posturing. Walter Veltroni, the Italian Deputy Prime Minister, has called for a privatisation programme so that clubs can buy and redevelop the grounds in which they traditionally play. In Turin, that could mean Juventus returning to the dilapidated Stadio Comunale and Torino going back to the even more decrepit Filadelfia stadium.

The Juventus move, should it come about this summer, has been given the blessing of Italy's league. Maybe, as Roberto Bettega, the chief executive of Juventus, maintains, the club really would prosper away from its foundations. Juventus would fill any arena, anywhere in their homeland.

There is also renewed speculation this weekend about Everton leaving Goodison Park, their home since March 15, 1892. It was on that day that Everton, in dispute with their landlord, vacated Anfield and so the landlord formed his own team — called Liverpool.

But would they really move? Since time in Merseyside football began, the two clubs have been separated only by the length of Stanley Park and moving them now would be unimaginable. Nevertheless, Peter Johnson, the Everton chairman, has encouraged talk of alternatives, of the options either to develop and enlarge Goodison Park even further or of moving out of the city to Knowsley or Kirby.

It is no more than an idea. Johnson has expressed his readiness to meet the Goodison for Everton campaigners: the talk is in the air while the club maintains its financial stability based on the ownership of the ground.

The English, of course, are not easily moved. Middlesbrough shifted the sands of time by vacating Ayresome Park for the Riverside Stadium two years ago and are prospering while the old docklands are rebuilt around them.

Bolton Wanderers, Sunderland and Derby County are moving at the end of this season, moving from homes occupied for the better part of a century, with Derby even persuading supporters to pay £35 for each engraved brick in the new stadium.

Others are inseparable from their roots. Next month, Aston Villa celebrate 100 years at the ground developed on the site of Sir Thomas Holte's vegetable garden and fishponds at Villa Cross in Aston. A decade ago, Villa did consider moving, but, mindful of the ingrained sentiment of Villa fans, they stayed, they rebuilt magnificently and they thrive.

Blackburn Rovers, through the persistence of Jack Walker, likewise eschewed the allegedly cheaper alternative of relocating to land offered by the borough council and instead tore down housing at Ewood to rebuild where Walker had always known his club to reside.

This feeling permeates our football. The game, the history, the belonging are part of what is now the business.

The Italians watch the money flowing in. They see English clubs using the collateral of the very ground on which they exist — and they envy it.

Hateley's second instalment adds up for Rangers

By Kevin McCarra

A CLUB will go to great lengths when Old Firm supremacy is at stake. Rangers have stretched across the Continent and reached into the past in their attempt to shore up a squad that has been bombarded by injury. With their trip to Celtic Park tomorrow in mind, they have, for the second time, signed Mark Hateley.

Rangers agreed to buy out his contract with Queens Park Rangers. Hateley, however, is far from being the only forward covered by the Ibrox club after an extremely meek performance in the 2-0 defeat by Dundee United on Wednesday. Attempts to buy Alessandro Melli from Parma continued yesterday.

The player, who has also had spells with AC Milan and Sampdoria, may have lost his youthful *élan*, but he did score for Parma when they won the Cup Winners' Cup in 1993 and, at 27, there are hopes that he can yet recover his early effectiveness. His arrival at Ibrox, though, is in question.

Melli is out of contract in the summer and Parma therefore risk losing him without compensation should he then move abroad, but the club is believed to be seeking about £750,000 for him at the moment. It is possible, too, that the player may prefer to wait a few months, when the proceeds of any deal would go solely to him.

Further frenzied thumbing of the Ibrox contacts book is suggested by rumours that they are eager to repatriate Allan Johnston, one of the two Scots at present with the French club, Rennes. The midfield player scored a hat-trick against Walter Smith's team while with Heart of Midlothian last season.

In order to sign him, Rangers would have to agree a fee with both Rennes and Hearts, since Johnston would be returning to the United Kingdom within 12 months of his departure. Given the complexities, Rangers are extremely unlikely to have Johnston or Melli available for the meeting with Celtic.

Given their manouevres, the club will be accused in some quarters of desperation, but there are occasions when panic is a suitable response. Smith has been reduced to wondering whether he has the manpower available to defend a five-point lead and so win the Bell's Scottish League title for the ninth consecutive season.

The list of injuries is agonising for Rangers, even if its length makes it tedious in recitation for outsiders. In summary form, established players such as Stuart McCall and Paul Gascoigne will continue to be absent for a while yet, although Richard Gough, the captain, may be fielded this afternoon. Hateley is needed because Rangers' stock of forwards is almost exhausted.

Celtic, startlingly beaten at Kilmarnock on Tuesday, cannot scrape together anything like the bad news announced by Rangers, but they are still concerned over Paolo Di Canio, who damaged a hamstring in the Old Firm Tennents Scottish Cup-tie ten days ago.

Whatever the personnel, Celtic hope to retain the mood of their 2-0 Cup victory, when the self-destructive anxiety shown in previous Old Firm matches was shed. After a week of upheaval that left the relative positions of the club unaltered, Tommy Burns, the Celtic manager, was amused to reflect on the histrionic coverage.

"There's been a million headlines written and a lot of tripe talked, but nothing has changed. You can never allow yourself to get carried away by the fickleness of football," he said.

BADMINTON

England double act catches Park's eye

By David Miller

PARK JOO BONG, acclaimed as the world's finest doubles player, carries the weight of English and, to a degree, British hopes on his slim shoulders. The newly-recruited coach was last night running his experienced eye over England's latest pair of international promise, Chris Hunt and Donna Kellogg.

With the careers of both Joanne Goode and Julie Bradbury interrupted by pregnancy, Steve Baddeley, the elite director of the Badminton Association of England, decided to form a previously untried young mixed doubles pair. Hunt and Kellogg had fulfilled expectation at the Yonex All-England Open championships this week by reaching the semi-finals of their event.

Park, nine times an All-England champion and a gold medal-winner at the Barcelona Olympic Games, has had little time to work with English players, yet is optimistic, in spite of the present broad lack of talent in British ranks.

"The English game has mental strengths and plenty of aggression," Park said yesterday, "but what we have to work with is flexibility, anticipation, in movement about the court and there must be improvement in technique at the net."

Park is happy with the attitude he has seen in training at the squad centre at Milton Keynes, where he has now set up home, though he had been unimpressed, upon appointment, to learn that not all national players had attended on a full-time basis in a sport still adjusting to professionalism. Park himself is adjusting: from player to coach and from Korean to English language and culture. He smiles easily, but you sense that lean frame carries a streak of Clint Eastwood at his meanest. No bad thing.

He considered it possible that medal-winning prospects could be developed in time for the Sydney Olympic Games of 2000 in women's doubles and mixed doubles. "Donna Kellogg is promising, but her physique needs strengthening," Park said.

Baddeley yesterday explained the reasons behind the strict attitude that he has introduced within the squad regarding fitness and a ban on alcohol.

He acknowledged being termed a disciplinarian, that he had had Coca-Cola poured over him by one disgruntled lady, but insisted that his was the correct route.

In the light of Britain's and England's present decline, none will doubt him. It is certain that in Park he will have found someone of like mind.

The progress of Hunt and Kellogg has alone sustained home interest in the present championships. In the first round, they beat the seeded Thomas Stavngaard and Ann Jorgensen, of Denmark, followed by victories over Chinese and then Russian opponents, all without the loss of a game.

COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FOOTBALL

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated
* denotes all-ticket

FA Carling Premiership

(1) Aston Villa v West Ham
(2) Blackburn v Wimbledon
(3) Everton v Derby
(4) Leicester v Middlesbrough
(5) Manchester Utd v Sheffield Wed
(6) Newcastle v Coventry
(7) Nottingham Forest v Liverpool
(8) Southampton v Arsenal
(9) Tottenham v Leeds

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	29	16	9	4	57	33	57
Liverpool	29	16	8	5	50	24	56
Arsenal	30	15	9	6	49	25	54
Newcastle	28	14	6	8	54	35	48
Sheff Wed	29	12	12	5	39	33	48
Aston Villa	29	13	7	9	36	27	46
Wimbledon	27	12	8	7	39	32	44
Chelsea	28	11	10	7	44	41	43
Leeds	30	11	7	12	24	31	40
Leicester	28	10	7	11	33	38	37
Tottenham	28	10	5	13	34	38	35
Blackburn	28	7	12	9	29	27	33
Everton	29	8	9	12	36	43	33
Derby	29	7	11	11	31	44	32
Sunderland	30	8	8	14	26	41	32
Coventry	30	6	12	12	26	39	30
West Ham	28	7	7	14	27	39	28
Nottm Forest	30	6	10	14	25	46	28
Southampton	28	6	8	14	37	46	26
† Middlesbro	27	6	7	14	37	49	22

† Middlesbrough deducted three points.

Nationwide League
First division

(10) Crystal Palace v Norwich
(11) Grimsby v Manchester City
(12) Huddersfield v Portsmouth
(13) Ipswich v Bolton
(14) Oldham v Wolverhampton
(15) Port Vale v Charlton
(16) Reading v Bradford
(17) Sheffield Utd v Oxford Utd
(18) Southend v Queens Park Rangers
(19) Swindon v Stoke
(20) Tranmere v Barnsley

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolton	37	21	12	4	80	46	75
Wolves	36	19	8	9	52	35	65
Barnsley	36	17	11	7	58	42	62
Sheffield Utd	36	16	10	10	61	42	58
Norwich	37	15	10	12	55	56	55
Ipswich	36	14	13	9	51	44	55
C Palace	35	14	11	10	65	38	53
Port Vale	37	12	15	10	44	43	51
Stoke	35	14	9	12	43	45	51
Tranmere	35	14	8	13	48	46	50
Portsmouth	35	14	8	13	42	39	50
Swindon	37	14	7	16	50	54	49
QPR	37	12	11	14	47	50	47
Oxford Utd	36	13	7	16	48	48	46
Reading	35	12	10	13	47	52	46
Charlton	35	13	7	15	43	50	46
Birmingham	35	12	10	13	41	42	46
Man City	35	13	6	16	44	47	45
West Brom	37	10	14	13	58	62	44
Huddersfield	37	11	11	15	41	52	44
Grimsby	35	8	10	17	47	66	34
Bradford	36	8	10	18	38	60	34
Southend	37	7	12	18	35	68	33
Oldham	34	7	10	17	34	46	31

GILBERT LEAGUE OF WALES: Barry v Rhyl; Caernarfon v Aberystwyth (2.30); Caersws v Holywell; Cemaes Bay v Newtown; Connah's Quay v Welshpool; Conwy v Ton Pentre; Ebbw Vale v Cwmbran (12.0); Llansantffraid v Bangor City (2.0); Porthmadog v Carmarthen Town.
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First division: Arsenal v Crystal Palace

Second division

(—) * Blackpool v Preston (12.0)
(21) Brentford v Burnley
(22) Bury v Gillingham
(23) Chesterfield v Wycombe
(24) * Crewe v Luton
(25) Millwall v Bournemouth
(26) Peterborough v Stockport
(27) Rotherham v Notts County
(28) Shrewsbury v Plymouth
(29) Walsall v Watford
(30) Wrexham v York

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brentford	34	16	13	5	50	31	61
Luton	34	16	9	9	57	39	57
Millwall	35	16	9	10	46	42	57
Crewe	33	18	3	12	46	38	56
Bury	33	15	10	8	47	34	55
Burnley	36	15	9	12	55	39	54
Walsall	34	15	8	11	42	35	53
Stockport	32	14	10	8	45	35	52
Watford	33	12	16	5	36	26	52
Bristol C	34	14	9	11	52	38	51
Wrexham	32	12	15	5	28	32	51
Chesterfield	33	13	10	10	29	28	49
Bournemouth	37	12	10	15	34	37	46
Blackpool	34	11	12	11	42	37	45
Preston	36	13	6	17	38	47	45
Gillingham	34	12	8	14	42	46	44
Shrewsbury	37	10	12	15	45	58	42
Plymouth	35	10	12	13	38	48	42
York	35	11	8	16	38	53	41
Bristol Rov	35	10	11	14	36	39	41
Wycombe	35	10	8	17	34	45	38
Peterborough	36	8	12	16	47	64	36
Notts County	35	5	11	19	24	45	26
Rotherham	34	4	12	18	25	49	24

Third division

(31) Barnet v Swansea
(32) Carlisle v Hereford
(33) Darlington v Chester
(34) Exeter v Scunthorpe
(35) Hartlepool v Rochdale
(36) Hull v Brighton
(37) Northampton v Lincoln
(38) Scarborough v Torquay
(39) Wigan v Cambridge Utd

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Carlisle	36	21	10	5	56	31	73
Wigan	[illegible]	21	[illegible]	9	73	47	70
Fulham	36	20	8	8	63	35	68
Chester	37	15	13	9	42	33	58
Swansea	37	17	6	14	49	42	57
Camb Utd	36	17	6	13	45	46	57
* Cardiff	36	17	5	13	40	41	56
Northampton	36	15	9	12	57	39	54
Scarborough	37	13	13	11	52	55	52
* Colchester	36	12	16	8	50	40	52
Lincoln	37	13	10	14	51	58	49
* Mansfield	36	12	13	11	39	37	49
Hull	[illegible]	11	16	9	34	36	49
Scunthorpe	35	14	6	15	48	50	48
Rochdale	[illegible]	10	15	11	44	45	45
Torquay	[illegible]	11	9	16	37	45	45
Barnet	36	10	15	11	36	35	45
L Orient	37	10	12	15	36	43	42
Exeter	37	10	9	18	39	53	39
Darlington	36	10	8	18	50	65	38
Hartlepool	[illegible]	10	8	19	40	56	38
Hereford	35	9	9	19	31	55	36
* Doncaster	35	9	7	19	36	57	34
† Brighton	37	9	9	20	45	67	32

† Brighton deducted two points
* not including [illegible] matches

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier division: Brentford v Bristol Manor Farm; Brislington v Barnstaple; Calne v Mangotsfield; [illegible] v Taunton; Chippenham v Bristol Rovers; Frome v Odd Down; Taverton v Paul St R; Weston-S v Bristol [illegible]

Vauxhall Conference

(—) Altrincham v Bath
(—) Bromsgrove v Rushden & D
(—) Halifax v Dover
(—) Kettering v Telford
(—) Macclesfield v Southport
(—) Morecambe v Farnborough
(—) Northwich v Gateshead
(—) Slough v Hayes
(—) Stevenage v Hednesford
(—) Welling v Kidderminster
(—) Woking v Stalybridge

Bell's Scottish League
Premier division

(40) Aberdeen v Dundee Utd
(41) Hearts v Hibernian
(42) Kilmarnock v Motherwell
(43) Raith v Dunfermline

First division

(44) Airdrie v Falkirk
(45) Clydebank v Partick
(46) Dundee v St Johnstone
(47) St Mirren v Greenock Morton
(48) Stirling v East Fife

Second division

(49) Berwick v Livingston
(—) Brechin v Clyde
(—) Queen of South v Hamilton
(—) Stenhousemuir v Dumbarton
(—) Stranraer v Ayr

Third division

(—) Albion v Queen's Park
(—) Cowdenbeath v Arbroath
(—) East Stirling v Alloa
(—) Forfar v Montrose
(—) Inverness CT v Ross County

FA CARLSBERG VASE: Semi-finals, first leg: Banstead Ath v Whitby; Gorsborough Town v North Ferriby
PRESS & JOURNAL HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Brora v Nairn County; Deveronvale v Peterhead; Elgin v Lossiemouth; Fort William v Buckie Thistle; Fraserburgh v Huntly; Keith v Clachnacuddin; Rothes v Cove
FAI HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: First Harps v Dundalk (7.30); Sligo v Bray (7.30)
BASS IRISH CUP: Quarter-finals: Cliftonville v Crusaders; Glentoran v Coagh; Loughgall v Coleraine; Ormagh v Limavady Utd

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier division: Ashford v Halesowen; Burton Albion v Chelmsford; Cambridge City v Salisbury; Crawley v Gloucester; Gravesend and Northfleet v Nuneaton; Grantham v Bromsgrove; Hastings v Cheltenham; Merthyr v Stamford; Newport AFC v King's Lynn; Sudbury Tn v Dorchester; Worcester City v Atherstone. Midland division: Bedworth v Hinckley Town; Dudley Town v Rothwell; Evesham v VS Rugby; Grantham v Tamworth; Moor Green v Corby; Raunds Tn v Solihull Boro; Shepshed D v Tiverton; Stourbridge v Bilston; Sutton Coldfield Town v RC Warwick. Southern division: Bashley v Weymouth; Dartford v Yate; Fareham v Fisher London; Forest Green v St Leonards; Havant v Buckingham Town; Margate v Newport IoW; Tonbridge Angels v Clevedon; Waterlooville v Cinderford; Weston-super-Mare v Fleet T; Witney v Cirencester Town

ICIS LEAGUE: Premier division: Aylesbury v Harrow; Bishop's Stortford v Purfleet; Bromley v Hitchin; Chertsey v Staines; Dagenham and Redbridge v Carshalton; Dulwich v St Albans; Grays v Kingstonian; Oxford City v Hendon; Sutton United v Enfield; Yeading v Heybridge; Yeovil v Boreham Wood. First division: Barton Rovers v Canvey Island; Billericay v Uxbridge; Chesham v Bognor Regis; Hampton v Aldershot Town; Maidenhead United v Basingstoke; Marlow v Croydon; Molesey v Wokingham; Thame v Tooting and Mitcham; Walton and Hersham v Abingdon Town; Whyteleafe v Leyton Pennant; Worthing v Berkhamsted. Second division: Barking v Metropolitan Police; Bracknell v Collier Row and Romford; Cheshunt v Wembley; Dorking v Bedford T; Edgware v Witham; Egham v Leighton Town; H Hempstead v Horsham; Hungerford v Leatherhead; Ware v Tilbury; Wivenhoe v Windsor and Eton. Third division: Aveley v Tring; Clapton v Braintree; Hornchurch v Hertford; Kingsbury v Harlow; Lewes v East Thurrock; Northwood v Epsom and Ewell; Southall v Flackwell Heath; Wingate and Finchley v Wealdstone

ENDSLEIGH MIDLAND COMBINATION: Premier division: David Lloyd v Massey Ferguson. Handrahan Timbers v Worcestershire. Highgate v Southam; Kenilworth v Alvechurch; Richmond Swifts v Bilston Community College; Wellesbourne v Coventry Sphinx; West Midland Fire Service v Shirley Cup: Semi-finals: Coleshill v Kings Heath; Meir KA v Knowle

TOMORROW

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated
* denotes all-ticket

FA Carling Premiership

Chelsea v Sunderland (4.0)

Nationwide League
First division

West Bromwich v Birmingham (2.10)

Second division

* Bristol Rovers v Bristol City (1.0)

Third division

Leyton Orient v Fulham (12.0)

Bell's Scottish League
Premier division

Celtic v Rangers

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Southern division: St Leonards v Waterlooville

UNIBOND LEAGUE: First division: Workington v Bradford Park Avenue.

GILBERT LEAGUE OF WALES: Inter Cable-Tel v Flint Town.

FAI HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Bohemians v Derry (3.15); Cork v Shelbourne (2.0); UCD v St Patrick's Athletic (3.15)

FA WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE: National division: Doncaster v Croydon (at Armthorpe Welfare Ground, 2.0); Millwall v Illesion (at Fisher FC, 2.0). Postponed: Wembley v Southampton.

FA WOMEN'S LEAGUE: Northern division: Bradford v Sheffield Wednesday. Glenwood St Helens v Wolverhampton; Stourport v Notts County. Southern division: Berkhamsted v Wimbledon; Leyton Orient v Longford

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier division: Accrington Stanley v Boston; Altrincham v Runcorn; Bamber Bridge v Marine; Bishop Auckland v Witton; Buxton v Colwyn Bay; Chorley v Lancaster; Emley v Winsford; Frickley v Guiseley; Knowsley v Blyth Spartans; Leek v Hyde; Spennymoor v Gainsborough. First division: Ashton United v Harrogate Town; Bradford Pk Ave v Droylsden; Eastwood Town v Congleton; Farsley Celtic v Netherfield; Gretna v Worksop; Lincoln United v Leigh; Matlock Town v Workington; Stocksbridge PS v Flixton; Warrington v Curzon Ashton; Whitley Bay v Atherton LR

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE: First division: Beckenham v Corinthian; Canterbury v Hythe; Cray v Whitstable Town; Crockenhill v Folkestone Invicta; Faversham v Tunbridge Wells; Furness v Sheppey; Greenwich v Slade Green; Lordswood v Ramsgate

LONDON SPARTAN LEAGUE: Premier division: Amersham v Woodford; Beaconsfield SYCOB v Harefield; Harwell v Cockfosters; Haringey v Islington St Marys; Hillingdon Boro v Brimsdown; Ruislip Manor v Brook House; St Margaretsbury v Barkingside; Waltham Abbey v Croydon.

MINERVA SOUTH MIDLANDS LEAGUE: Premier division: Bedford v Arlesey; Biggleswade v Letchworth; Buckingham Athletic v Toddington; London Colney v Hoddesdon; Potters Bar v Langford; Royston v Milton Keynes; Welwyn Garden v Harpenden.

SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE: First division: Cambridge Utd v Watford (11.0); Chelsea v Arsenal (11.0); Gillingham v Charlton (10.45); Leyton Orient v Ipswich (11.0); Norwich v Millwall (11.0); Portsmouth v Fulham (11.0); Southend v Queens Park Rangers (11.0); West Ham v Tottenham (11.0). Second division: Colchester v Brentford (11.0); Luton v Bournemouth (11.0); Reading v Bristol City (11.0); Southampton v Brighton (11.0); Swindon v Wimbledon (11.0)

HELLENIC LEAGUE: Premier division: Endsleigh v Didcot; Fairford v Highworth; Kintbury v Bicester; North Leigh v Brackley; Wantage v Shortwood Cup: Semi-final, first leg: Carterton v Swindon Supermarine

FEDERATION BREWERY NORTHERN LEAGUE: First division: Bedlington Terriers v Dunston Federation; Crook v Chester-le-Street; Durham v Stockton; Morpeth v Consett; Murton v Seaham Red Star; RTM Newcastle v Tow Law; Shildon v West Auckland; South Shields v Billingham; Whickham v Easington.

COMBINED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Ashford v Raynes Park Vale; Cobham v Merstham; Cranleigh v Cove; Farnham v Viking Sports; Feltham v Chipstead; Hartley Wintney v Corinthian-Casuals; Netherne v Ash; Reading Town v Westfield; Sandhurst v Godalming and Guildford; Walton Casuals v Bedfont.

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE: First division: Chadderton v Trafford; Clitheroe v Blackpool Rovers; Darwen v Nantwich Town; Glossop North End v Salford; Holker Old Boys v Burscough; Maine Road v Eastwood H; Newcastle Town v Mossley; Penrith v Atherton Collieries; Rossendale v Bootle; St Helens v Kidsgrove; Vauxhall GM v Prescot Cables.

ESSEX SENIOR LEAGUE: Premier division: Bowers v Sawbridgeworth; Concord Rangers v East Ham; Eton Manor v Basildon U; Ford United v Saffron Walden; Hullbridge Sports v Great Wakering

AFA SENIOR CUP: Semi-finals: Civil Service v West Wickham; Crouch End Vampires v Lensbury

BANKS'S BREWERY LEAGUE: Premier division: Brierley Hill T v Darlaston; Cradley Town v Tividale Gornal A v Wednesfield; Hill Top R v Stourport B; Lye Town v Bloxwich S; Stafford T v Ludlow T; Walsall Wood v Eccleshall HT; Wolverhampton C v Westfield; Wolverhampton United v Malvern T

JEWSON EASTERN COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Bury Town v Newmarket; Clacton v Wroxham; Fakenham v Gorleston; Soham v Felixstowe P and T; Sudbury W v Diss; Tiptree v Lowestoft; Warboys v Halstead; Wisbech v Stowmarket; Woodbridge Town v Walton

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: First division: Lymington v Gosport; Totton v Wimborne Town; Aerostructures v Bournemouth; Brockenhurst v Cowes Sports; Christchurch v Downton; East Cowes v Bemerton Heath; Petersfield v BAT; Ryde Sports v Andover; Thatcham Town v Portsmouth.

UNISPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Boston v St Neots; Eynesbury v Bourne; Ford Sports v Mirrlees Blackstone; Kempston v Cogenhoe; Long Buckby v Spalding; Stamford v Desborough; S and L Corby v Northampton Spencer; Stotfold v Holbeach; Wellingborough v Newport Pagnell; Wootton v Potton

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE: First division: Horsham YMCA v Arundel; Mile Oak v Eastbourne Town; Pagham v Hailsham; Peacehaven and Telscombe v Three Bridges; Portfield v Burgess Hill; Ringmer v Oakwood Selsdean v Southwick; Selsey v Langney Sports; Shoreham v Whitehawk.

INTERLINK EXPRESS ALLIANCE: Blackenhall v Stapenhill; Bridgnorth v Oldbury U; Hinckley Athletic v Shifnal T; Knypersley V v Halesowen H; Paisali V v Rocester; Pershore T v Boldmere St M; Rushall O v Barwell; Sandwell v Chasetown; Willenhall v Stourbridge T.

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier division: Belper Town v Arnold; Brigg Town v Hallam; Danaby v Pickering; Hatfield Main v Glasshoughton Welfare; Hucknall Town v Pontefract Cols; Ossett Albion v Ashfield; Selby v Armthorpe Welfare; Sheffield v Maltby MW; Thackley v Ossett Town

SOUTHERN AMATEUR LEAGUE: First division: East Barnet OG v Old Parmiterians; Norsemen v Polytechnic; Old Actonians v NatWest Bank; South Bank v Civil Service

SOUTHERN OLYMPIAN LEAGUE: Senior one: Nottsborough v Albanian; Parkfield v Wandsworth Borough; Ulysses v Southgate County; Witan v St Mary's Coll.

ARTHURIAN LEAGUE: Premier division: Corinthians v Bremwoods; Cholmeleians v Lancing; Reptonians v Foresters

OLD BOYS' LEAGUE: Premier division. Cardinal Manning OB v Old Kingsburians; Lalymer OB v Old Ignatians, Old Aloysians v Old Meadonians, Old Hamptonians v Old Vaughanians; Old Tentonians v Glyn OB

SCHOOLS MATCHES: English Schools Snickers Under-19 Trophy: Quarter-final: King's, Chester v Wolverhampton GS (11.0). FA Premier League Under-16 Trophy: Semi-final: Northumberland v West Midlands (1.30) Wrennal Trophy: Preston v Rossendale. Goodhand Trophy: Worksop v Grimsby. Yorkshire Trophy: Leeds v Doncaster. Manchester Cup: Semi-final: Wigan v Oldham Ayresome Park Cup: Semi-final: Stockton v Hartlepool. Inter-town challenge matches: Sheffield v Chesterfield; Newcastle v Barnsley.

England's decision to opt for speed at scrum half sparks questions about selection policy

Healey plans to put on motor show

By John Hopkins

THERE IS a red blob deep in the corner of Austin Healey's right eye, a splash of colour as vivid as a poppy in a cornfield. What is that, the England scrum half was asked? Healey raised his right hand cautiously. "Oh, that," he said quietly. "That is a burst blood vessel. I did that about three weeks ago. It doesn't bother me."

Healey, 23, who won his first cap as a replacement against Ireland last month, is as matter-of-fact about this temporary disfigurement as he is about revealing that he does not read. "I have not got one," he said when asked to name the book by his bedside. "I have not read a book ever. Well, I suppose I read the odd one at school and I have flicked through a few since, but I have not read one from cover to cover. I am far too hyper to sit still. I know the last film I saw, though. Will Greenwood and I saw *Jerry Maguire* last Sunday evening. It was great. Made me want to go out and become an American sportswriter."

Five Nations' Championship

Healey has dark, curly hair, a level gaze, the accent of a Northerner, as befits a man who went to school in The Wirral and played his rugby for Waterloo and Orrell before moving to Leicester. His open face has not yet acquired any permanent battle scars. His humour is dry.

At Leicester, Bob Dwyer, the Australian-born coach, likened him to David Campese, the gifted former Australia wing, and said: "Austin has real talent." For Jack Rowell, the England coach, Healey "is a very exciting package".

These are plaudits to turn a young man's head were it not for the fact that Healey seems down-to-earth. His confidence, which is considerable, is not the "I'm a cheeky chappie, knock me down and watch me bounce up again" sort that scrum halves generally have. This is the case with Andy Gomarsall, the man Healey has dislodged from the England team. Rather, it comes from a deep belief in himself and his ability.

These characteristics were present in his decision to remove himself from consideration for Ireland earlier in the season and the explanation he now gives is clear and mature. "I asked myself a question: if I was sat in the Irish changing-room about to play England and all the Irish lads were banging their heads together, would I be able to say 'let's go and beat the English?' And I would not have been able to. I would have played with passion, but there is no point in going to play for a team you're not motivated for."

It is appropriate for a man bearing the name of a racy sports car that he has roared as quickly to the forefront of the game in England as Robert Howley, the scrum half, did for Wales. Healey's passing is not as quick as, say, Robert Jones's, but he is maturing in his decision-making and he is learning all the time. "Bob [Dwyer] said my game against Toulouse in the European Cup was the best he had seen me play," Healey said. Most of all, he possesses exceptional speed, having run 100 metres in 10.9 seconds as a teenager.

"I would be the first to admit that at the start of the season I was not the best box-kicker or passer of the ball," Healey said, "but you have to look at it from a wider perspective. Rugby is about reading the game and doing the right thing at the right time. Now I can pass and kick like a scrum half — but I can also sprint like a sprinter and that is perhaps a new aspect to the team."

Exceptional athleticism, speed and a physical style of play were among the attributes of the two scrum halves that Healey admires above all others. The first is Dewi Morris, the long-time England scrum half before and during the 1995 World Cup. "Over the past ten years, he has been the best England scrum half. He has put some confidence in me this year whenever he has seen me and has been a big help to me. I saw him last when we played Sale. He didn't say much after the game because we had beaten them. He was complimentary during the game, though, and for a change I didn't try and hit him and he didn't hit me. There's a certain amount of respect there."

The other is the legendary Welshman, Gareth Edwards, and there is a symmetry in this because Healey is the most athletic scrum half since Edwards. He has the poise and balance of a gymnast that Edwards had, too. "That try of Gareth Edwards against Scotland where he chipped over, grub-kicking the ball, and dived into all that mud," Healey said, remembering Edwards's famous try in 1972. "That was a bit special."

It will be a significant moment for Healey to play this afternoon in Cardiff, where Edwards scored so many tries. He grinned at the prospect. "That's a good trivia question. I can ask my grandkids who played scrum half for England in the last game at Cardiff Arms Park? They'll probably say Dewi Morris."

Healey will begin his first full international today in Cardiff, where Edwards, his hero, once held court. Photograph: Peter Nicholls

Gomarsall's exit finds Bracken out in the cold

ROB ANDREW

Jack Rowell gave me two genuine surprises this week: first, he invited me back into the England squad; then, he dropped Andy Gomarsall for the game against Wales today. My situation will last for this week only; Gomarsall, however, has a whole career ahead of him and I had thought that Rowell would retain him after his five international appearances.

There has usually been a consistency to Rowell's selection policy and, having come so far, I thought he would stick by the courage of his convictions and put out an unchanged side — rightly or wrongly.

The problems with Gomarsall at scrum half were self-evident long before the defeat by France, yet Rowell ignored these and stuck by his man. There was a collective burden of responsibility for the loss two weeks ago, but the accusatory finger appears to have been pointed at just one individual.

Has Rowell given in to his critics about Gomarsall, me included? There was a sense, too, in the France game, of Rowell giving in to the plea of some commentators (not me this time) that England should go hell for leather from the first minute. So they did and look what happened. Many observers have been pressing the claims of Austin Healey at scrum half. Suddenly, he is in and Gomarsall out.

Personally, I would have opted for Kyran Bracken. Whether he is out of favour or out of fashion, I am not sure, but, of the three, Bracken is the better-balanced performer and the one showing consistent form. Incredibly, he is not even in the squad.

> 'Incredibly, he is not even in the squad'

So what of Healey? I do not share the concerns about his pass. From what I have seen of him, the service he provides is more than adequate. His kicking abilities are not as inconsistent as are those of Gomarsall. Neither are they perfect.

Remember, Healey is a recently-converted three-quarter, a player who brings the unexpected, probably because he is a scrum half still playing, in a way, like a wing. Give him an inch of daylight and he is away.

Healey's cover defence is extraordinary, but he is not in the side for that aspect. A scrum half at international level is there, above all, to organise a side. For all his successful few minutes in Dublin, he will find the step up hard.

It is relatively easy playing behind a pack as dominant as Leicester's every week. The tries that Healey scores are nearly always from broken play. There will not be the same room today.

Moreover, Healey is up against Robert Howley, the best scrum half in Britain. Howley's problem, like that of Robert Jones before him, was that for several years now Wales have lacked the front five to compete against the top teams. It could well be Wales's undoing again, because if England have one area copper-bottomed in selection terms, it is the tight five. It is here that the triple crown can be won.

It is history that England wasted the chance of going for a grand slam. How England respond to the France result is important. It is to be hoped that the basic about playing for 80 minutes, not 55 then mentally packing up for home, is ingrained. Tactically, England have veered from a policy of subdue and penetrate, which they did successfully against Ireland and Scotland, to all-out attack. I feel it is important, especially away from home, to revert to the former.

Obviously, the restoration of Mike Catt, after Paul Grayson's withdrawal, gives him an unexpected chance to show that he can fit into a balanced game-plan. He is a talented runner who should have learnt from his three games before Christmas about the need for accuracy in his kicking game — he must make the most of it, though the combination of Catt and Healey will surely have the Welsh defence guessing.

There will be 50,000 Welsh supporters hyped to the eyeballs. The National Stadium is a cauldron of emotions at the best of times. Wales's last match there before the building work, especially if they can deny England a triple crown, provides them with a great incentive.

I was lucky enough to win in Cardiff, in 1991 and 1995, but these are the only two occasions that England have won there since 1963. Wales are always up when England are in town, but on this occasion England should have too much firepower all round.

In terms of winning the championship, England would be unwise to expect any favours from Scotland in Paris, especially in mid-March and with a grand slam beckoning for France. Scotland won there two years ago, I know, but lightning does not strike twice. In saying that, I hope the same applies with England after the result two weeks ago.

Wales takes record-breaking Jenkins to heart

Gerald Davies looks at the Roundhead who made his mark despite a Cavalier tradition

TODAY, Neil Jenkins will earn his fiftieth cap for his country. At 25 years and eight months, he is the youngest player of any nation to reach this landmark so soon. Thirty-five of these caps have been at stand-off half, where he received mixed reviews. This season, he is playing at full back and looking more thoroughly at home in a Welsh jersey than hitherto.

Jenkins may not have been born to greatness, but he is well on his way to achieving it. He is already established in the record books. He has scored 534 points for Wales. This places him behind Michael Lynagh, who scored 911 points, Gavin Hastings, who retired with 676 points, and Grant Fox, who scored 620, in the all-time rankings of points-scorers. He recently overtook Hugo Porta's mark of 530.

With 91 points in eight appearances this season and with international matches coming thick and fast in the modern era, the list will soon have to be revised. The previous highest Wales scorer was Paul Thorburn with 304 points, which had superseded Phil Bennett's modest-looking 166. Thus, Jenkins is already Wales's greatest goal-kicker.

Week after week, the Pontypridd crowd revel in his technique and craftsmanship at stand-off half, which he could not, for some reason, refashion for his country. For his club, he has yet to play a bad or indifferent game. More, he ensures victory by his own boot or tactical capability and determination — or allows others to be the beneficiaries.

Jenkins has scored 254 points in the Welsh League this season, which brings his total for the six-year lifetime of the competition to 1,576 — naturally, a Welsh record, too. He also ensures that his club, Pontypridd, are high scorers. They have collected 67 tries in 14 league outings this season.

There is a danger in assessing Jenkins simply in terms of statistics. He moves the scoreboard, not a crowd, yet, if he is not a Cavalier, he does take chances; if he is thought more of a Roundhead, he is not a stickler for the playing disciplines. A lot of Pontypridd's tries stem from well within their own half.

He is no swashbuckler of the kind all Welshmen wish in their dreams. The matter-of-fact stand-off halves who are not rubbed with stardust and who are elevated to the national team are often broken in spirit by the constant carping that comes their way. They move moodily on.

Not Jenkins. Not only has he consistently conquered the odds on the field, but also the criticism that has flowed his way from the terraces. When he was in the team, there were those who wished him out; when he was excluded, the same people wished he was in. This disfavour, not to say hostility, was largely a domestic matter. He is highly thought of outside Wales.

Jenkins has a marvellous footballing sense that is increasingly obvious now that he plays full back for his country. He has responded so much to this challenge that, at this stage, he would be the first choice in that position for the British Isles in South Africa this summer. His tenacity will also ensure that he challenges for his favoured position as the team's fulcrum.

There has been a transformation in the way that he is now perceived. At long last, people are responding warmly to him; he is thought of with affection, which has been a long time coming. Yet this is at a time when he might so easily have become the focus of criticism. Two errors that might have been attributed to him may have led to costly losses this season. Elwood's capricious garry-owen shaved the post at Cardiff for an untakable ball that gave Ireland the lead they did not thereafter relinquish. At Parc des Princes, the cruel trajectory of the bouncing ball, followed by a second unpredictable kickback — which Jenkins could not have anticipated — led to France extending their second-half lead.

Empathy, the sense of disaster shared, not sympathy, with its patronising distance, was the response in Wales to Jenkins's dilemmas. He has proved himself to be a big man, in heart and indomitable spirit. After winning his first cap in 1991, he is no overnight success, but he is proving more durable than the fly by nights.

France in harmony with three wise men

From Peter Bills in Paris

THE spring sun shone in Paris this week, streaming through the stained-glass windows of Notre Dame and lighting with charm the pavement cafés . . . just as it did 25 years ago, almost to the week, when a France side produced the performance of a lifetime.

A warm, springlike day at Stade Colombes — the former venue for international rugby in Paris — an England penalty kick at goal and hope in the hearts of every *Anglais* on the terraces. The kick flew narrowly wide and England prepared for the restart. As they did so, France launched a moment of sporting genius.

The try that Pierre Villepreux conjured that day from behind his own posts remains an extravagant signature on 25 years of international rugby; it was crafted by exquisite technique. Passes were timed to eliminate defenders, the ball was shown then retained and opponents were confounded by the flow of the play.

France's victory, 37-12 in a final appearance at Colombes, contained six tries, but was important for reasons other than nostalgia. Within that side were three players — Villepreux, Jean-Claude Skrela and Jo Maso — who espoused a theory, players who nurtured and cherished a dream: that they could play winning rugby with style.

This weekend, in their respective roles as assistant coach, coach and manager of France, they prepare a team for the rare honour of a grand slam, the first to be contested by France in Paris.

The coaching chemistry between Villepreux and Skrela was first glimpsed at Toulouse. "When Jean-Claude finished as a player, I asked him to come and join me in coaching," Villepreux said. "He knew my philosophy of the game and so he was the natural one to join with me."

Under their influence, Toulouse dominated French club rugby, winning the championship in 1985, 1986 and 1989. They were without peer. The march of time, though, is relentless and Villepreux acknowledges how rugby has changed since 1972.

Villepreux: silk-tongued

"When a player was tackled with the ball then [1972], it was a mistake," he said. "Today, it is no mistake. Now rugby is really physical, but I believe that tomorrow our game will be played by players able to pass the ball, with a good understanding of the play, show flair and know when to deliver the ball and when to retain it — just like 25 years ago."

Villepreux's ingredient for the rugby of the future is an amalgamation of the philosophy of the players in 1972 and the physical power of the present-day performer.

Skrela concurs. "The game has evolved a lot since our days at Toulouse," he said. "Even so, the preparation remains much the same. The rules and form of rugby have changed and so we must adapt our technique, but our type of work, understanding, communication are much as before."

Maso, the prince of creative midfield play in his era, has observed the flourishing Villepreux-Skrela partnership over the years. "Jean-Claude was very happy to have Pierre back working with him; they are old friends, old accomplices," he said. "As soon as we appointed Jean-Claude as trainer, his first wish was to ask Pierre to rejoin him."

The wish was, initially, resisted by the French federation, for Villepreux had been *persona non grata* in the eyes of the authorities for some years. Maso, himself once rejected as a player by the selectors for the heinous crime of having long hair, shrugged at the rejection of Villepreux and advised patience. A year later, the pair were reunited.

Maso regards Skrela as the cornerstone of the coaching staff. Villepreux, he says, brings all his capacity to put words together so well. Maso cast a contented eye over the pair and said: "Each has his quality of generosity towards the other. They are two great players searching for the best possible, most effective game."

CRICKET

Gillespie ensures that fortune favours Australia

FROM JACK BANNISTER IN PORT ELIZABETH

PORT ELIZABETH (first day of five. Australia won toss): Australia, with nine first-innings wickets in hand, are 199 runs behind South Africa

AUSTRALIA took the first-day honours in the second Test match here yesterday, but not by such a wide margin as seemed likely when they had South Africa all but through the ropes at 95 for seven in mid-afternoon. Then came a recovery led by Brian McMillan and David Richardson, who put on 85 in 28 overs, and the wicket of Matthew Hayden in the closing 50 minutes meant that the home side had clawed back a little lost ground.

A little, but not much, because any fielding captain will take a total of 209 as a good day's work for his bowlers and, if Australia get through the first hour this morning, they could establish a stranglehold on the match, as they did in the first Test at Johannesburg.

The talking-point was the pitch. Hardly any grass was taken off before the start and its appearance convinced both captains that they wanted to bowl first. Mark Taylor was the lucky man and seldom in recent years has the ball bounced and moved so extravagantly at the St George's Park ground.

Jason Gillespie's first five-wicket haul for his country was no more than he deserved after making the initial breakthrough with the wickets of Gary Kirsten and Jacques Kallis in his first five overs, both caught close on the leg side off lifting deliveries.

The Australians have studied Kirsten and he has yet to receive a ball of pace in this series from over the wicket. Thus, they deny him room for his favourite off-side strokes and he now lacks confidence. The top order looked frail and so it proved.

Glenn McGrath had Adam Bacher taken at gully and then, seven balls later, forced Hansie Cronje to play on for the third of the day's five ducks. At 22 for four, the home crowd of 12,500 was silenced until Daryll Cullinan and Gibbs rode their luck to reach lunch safely.

Taylor had no support seam bowler and turned to Shane Warne for control while he worked his new-ball pair downwind. It says much for Warne that a shiny ball on a grassy pitch failed to lessen his threat and, once Gillespie had claimed three wickets in as many overs, Australia were nearly through. Cullinan was dismissed for 34 to a poor stroke to Warne in the gully and then Gillespie bowled Herschelle Gibbs for 31 and had Shaun Pollock leg-before next ball. Richardson wandered out to join McMillan with Gillespie's figures at 14.2-7-32-5, but the pair played as though there were no problems.

Both are phlegmatic and possessed of a well-organised, simple technique. Australia's safest close catchers, Mark Waugh and Taylor, respectively dropped regulation chances from Gibbs at slip, which did not matter, and Richardson when it did, at 153 for seven, with Gillespie the sufferer twice.

The eighth-wicket pair added another 27 before, having hit Warne for one six, Richardson went for another and McGrath took a fine running catch to his left at long-off.

The wicketkeeper's 47 came off 105 balls, with McMillan completing his tenth Test fifty off five fewer balls faced. He and Allan Donald put on 24 for the ninth wicket before the all-rounder picked out Steve Waugh off a rare long hop by Warne and Donald pushed one back to the same bowler.

Facing 13 torrid overs before the close, Hayden edged to Cullinan at slip in Pollock's second over, but Taylor and Matthew Elliott saw the day out in relative comfort.

An unusual incident just before lunch saw Cullinan pull a short ball to Hayden, who seemed to pull off a spectacular catch at short leg. The batsman stood his ground and Rudi Koertzen, the umpire, confirmed that the ball had struck the fielder's helmet first.

PORT ELIZABETH SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA: First Innings

G Kirsten c Hayden b Gillespie	0
A M Bacher c Elliott b McGrath	11
J H Kallis c Blewett b Gillespie	0
D J Cullinan c Warne b Gillespie	34
*W J Cronje b McGrath	0
H H Gibbs b Gillespie	31
B M McMillan c S R Waugh b Warne	56
S M Pollock lbw b Gillespie	0
†D J Richardson c McGrath b Warne	47
A A Donald c and b Warne	8
P R Adams not out	5
Extras (b 8, lb 8, w 1)	17
Total	209

FALL OF WICKETS 1-13, 2-17, 3-21, 4-22, 5-70, 6-95, 7-95, 8-180, 9-204

BOWLING: McGrath 22-7-66-2; Gillespie 23-10-54-5; Warne 24.4-5-62-3; Blewett 4-2-3-0; Bevan 2-0-8-0.

AUSTRALIA: First Innings

M L Hayden c Cullinan b Pollock	0
*M A Taylor not out	6
M T G Elliott not out	2
Extras (lb 2)	2
Total (1 wkt)	10

M E Waugh, G S Blewett, S R Waugh, M G Bevan, †I A Healy, S K Warne, J N Gillespie and G D McGrath to bat.

FALL OF WICKET: 1-1.

BOWLING: Donald 5-3-2-0; Pollock 4-2-2-1; Adams 2-0-2-0; McMillan 2-0-2-0.

Umpires: S Venkataraghavan (India) and R E Koertzen (South Africa).

Sri Lanka press for win to level series

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

HAMILTON (first day of five, New Zealand won toss): New Zealand have scored 222 against Sri Lanka

NUWAN ZOYSA and Muttiah Muralitharan claimed three wickets each as Sri Lanka dismissed New Zealand for 222 on the first day of the second Test match in Hamilton yesterday.

Sri Lanka, needing a win to square the two-match series, tied down the home batsmen and only Blair Pocock mastered the bowling in scoring his best Test score of 85 in 286 minutes.

Sri Lanka gained an early success when Bryan Young, who scored an unbeaten 267 in the first Test, was run out for four. Horne was clean bowled by Zoysa, the 18-year-old fast bowler, playing a loose shot and Fleming, the captain, fell to a sharp catch in the slips. When a Zoysa inswinger trapped Astle leg-before for nought, New Zealand were 100 for four.

In the afternoon session, the spinners took over, with Muralitharan extracting significant turn. Cairns was caught by Ranatunga at silly mid-on off Dharmasena and Parore was run out for 25. Pocock's long vigil was ended soon afterwards when he fell to a bat-pad catch off Muralitharan.

Daniel Vettori was deceived by Muralitharan, who clean bowled him for four, and Dipak Patel was caught in the deep as he tried to slog the same bowler.

The score was given some respectability by Doull, who hit a brisk 20. Muralitharan finished with figures of three for 43 while Zoysa took three for 47.

NEW ZEALAND: First Innings

B A Pocock c Tillekeratne b Muralitharan	85
B A Young run out	4
M J Horne b Zoysa	21
*S P Fleming c Mahanama b Zoysa	2
N J Astle lbw b Zoysa	0
C L Cairns c Ranatunga b Dharmasena	10
†A C Parore run out	25
D N Patel c Dharmasena b Muralitharan	13
D L Vettori b Muralitharan	4
S B Doull c P A de Silva b Vaas	20
H T Davis not out	8
Extras (b 11, lb 9, nb 10)	30
Total	222

FALL OF WICKETS 1-19, 2-88, 3-96, 4-100, 5-126, 6-172, 7-172, 8-178, 9-203.

BOWLING: Vaas 12.4-1-32-1; Zoysa 18-3-47-3; S C de Silva 15-4-36-0; Dharmasena 22-7-39-1; Muralitharan 22-4-43-3; Jayasuriya 1-0-5-0.

SRI LANKA: *A Ranatunga, S T Jayasuriya, R S Mahanama, P A de Silva, H P Tillekeratne, †R S Kaluwitharana, W P U J C Vaas, N Zoysa, M Muralitharan, H D P K Dharmasena, S C de Silva.

Umpires: D B Cowie (New Zealand) and Mahboob Shah (Pakistan).

India given fine start by Kumble and Joshi

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

THE India spin bowlers, Anil Kumble and Sunil Joshi, combined to leave West Indies struggling at 61 for three at lunch on the opening day of the second Test match in Port of Spain, Trinidad, yesterday.

Kumble, the leg-spinner and India vice-captain, removed both openers in successive overs after he was introduced in the ninth over of the day. Then, three minutes before lunch, Joshi, the left-armer, removed Brian Lara for 14, much to the disappointment of a 10,000 home crowd.

West Indies won the toss, but only decided to bat after lengthy consultations between Courtney Walsh, the captain, and the team management. The wicket at Queen's Park Oval was relaid before the start of the season and has been the subject of considerable debate.

Prasad and Kuruvilla, the India new-ball bowlers, gained movement and bounce in the early stages, but Sachin Tendulkar, the captain, soon turned to his spinners. Kumble made the initial breakthrough, claiming Williams for 18 to a pad-bat catch at silly point from his fourth ball. Three runs later, Kumble tempted Campbell to on-drive against the spin and the ball spooned to extra cover off the leading edge. Indeed, Kumble could have had three wickets in three overs, but Kuruvilla dropped Lara at mid-off in his next over.

Chanderpaul and Lara spent just over an hour together to share 33 for the third wicket, but Joshi broke the partnership when Lara edged to slip.

West Indies gave a first cap to Mervyn Dillon, the 22-year-old fast bowler who is in his first season of first-class cricket. He replaced Ian Bishop, his fellow Trinidadian, who suffered an injury to his right thigh in the first Test in Jamaica.

WEST INDIES: First Innings

S L Campbell c Prasad b Kumble	8
S C Williams c Dravid b Kumble	18
S Chanderpaul not out	18
B C Lara c Azharuddin b Joshi	14
C L Hooper not out	1
Extras (lb 1, nb 1)	2
Total (3 wkts)	61

R I C Holder, †J R Murray, C E L Ambrose, F A Rose, M Dillon and *C A Walsh to bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-26, 2-29, 3-59.

BOWLING: Prasad 8-3-27-0; Kuruvilla 9-6-5-0; Kumble 9-1-24-2; Joshi 2-0-4-1.

INDIA: *S R Tendulkar, V V S Laxman, N S Sidhu, R S Dravid, S C Ganguly, M Azharuddin, †N R Mongia, A Kumble, S Joshi, A Kuruvilla, B K V Prasad.

Umpires: L R Barker (West Indies) and S G Randell (Australia).

RUGBY LEAGUE: CODEBREAKER CONTINUES TO SET TREND WITH OVAL BALL

It's Friday, so it must be 13 men at the Stoop for Offiah

Christopher Irvine catches up with a man whose life looks like an endless book of records

Martin Offiah will set a record of a different kind next weekend. In little more than 24 hours, he will collect his MBE at Buckingham Palace, play rugby league for London Broncos at Warrington and rugby union in a Bedford shirt at Rotherham. He could spare only a short time this week before nipping off to a House of Commons reception. Life was not so hectic at Wigan.

Juggling rugby careers and being back in the London hurly-burly plainly suits Offiah. He was virtually reclusive in his early league days at Widnes — score the tries, lock the door and await the next match. Tries, of which he has scored 425, an average of 42 a season in league, still motivate him. Only a handful for Bedford partly explains the frustration that he has felt in his return to union after nine years.

"First, there was the toe injury; then, there's the way union is," he said. "You don't get as many chances to get over the whitewash. Bedford are a new team and they're building. My handling's improved, but union is still very congested. I don't remember someone getting the ball on their own line and going the length of the field. In league, there is that freedom."

It sounds like a marked man talking; moreover, a player idly talked about, on his arrival at Bedford, in terms of England and British Isles selection. Offiah, 30, had forgotten from his days at Rosslyn Park what a difference two extra tacklers can make. Bizarrely, things improved when Bedford put Steve McCurrie, a league hooker, at centre, but Offiah is still coming to terms with limited space and opportunities.

In the six weeks when the seasons overlap, Offiah will be the only player combining both codes. Far from being daunted by the workload, he reported on Monday to the Stoop Memorial Ground, the Broncos' new home, with obvious relish. He hobbled his way through four matches for London last year, because of the toe injury. Now fully fit, he is anxious to prove himself at home to St Helens, the Super League champions, tomorrow evening.

Tony Currie, the London coach, said: "He's turned up in very good shape. You can see it in his attitude in training. He's jumping out of his skin. We did sprint moves the other day and the kids tried to take him on. He held them at bay and, when he wanted to go, he went ... he's still got it."

After six months without league, Offiah is in a hurry to get going. "Against Waterloo last week, with five minutes to go, all I could think about was that I'd be playing Saints next week," he said. "It's a baptism of fire, but I'm looking forward to it. What a better way to start."

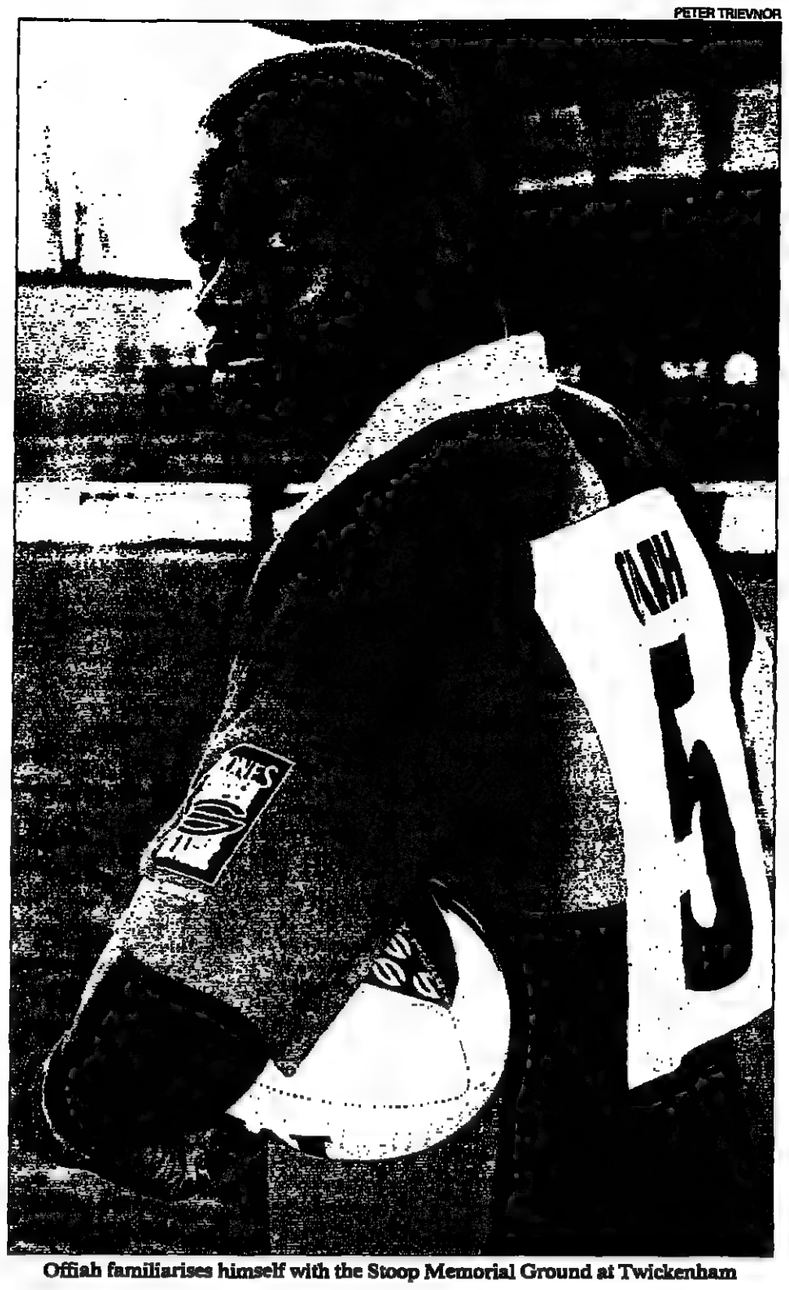
How comfortably a player can alternate between union and league, only Offiah's experience will tell. The thought has fired his imagination. He describes these as exciting times, especially the prospect of him being reunited at the Broncos with Shaun Edwards, the Great Britain scrum half, whose request at Wigan for a free transfer will be discussed next Tuesday by the Central Park board.

Like Offiah, Edwards sees his future at London, for he, too, is in his thirties. Edwards alongside Offiah would be another fillip for the Broncos, who, in spite of having Richard Branson on board, still look to be the poor relations to Harlequins, their landlords, occupying a couple of Portakabins at the Stoop.

Offiah said: "There's more pressure on us. We don't want to be seen as a flash in the pan after a good first Super League season. People in London are far more aware of us now. The world club championship this summer is very important. Matches against Brisbane and Canberra will fill the place."

His own target is clear. Offiah, seventh in the all-time league try list, can leapfrog Ellery Hanley, Lionel Cooper, Eric Batten and Alf Ellaby, into third place, with 22 more tries. The record — 796, by Brian Bevan — is one of very few beyond him.

PETER TRIEVNOR



Offiah familiarises himself with the Stoop Memorial Ground at Twickenham

St Helens close to securing Harris

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

ST HELENS are more confident than ever of securing the services of Iestyn Harris from Warrington Wolves. Harris, the Wales and Great Britain back, was put on the transfer list at £1.35 million by Warrington last July.

Harris, 20, was not included in the Warrington side for the opening Stones Super League match at Bradford Bulls last night. He has reportedly agreed personal terms with St Helens, who hope to negotiate a cash deal after Warrington's rejection of one involving the exchange of players.

David Howes, the St Helens chief executive, said: "We are looking for a valuation that suits both clubs. The dialogue has never stopped."

Wigan Warriors, who are missing Jason Robinson and Shaun Edwards for their opening match at home to Halifax Blue Sox tomorrow, are hoping that the work permit problems that have delayed the arrival of Paul Koloi, 24, a Tongan centre, can be resolved within two weeks.

In their first competitive outing under Eric Hughes, the new coach, Wigan have Craig Murdock at scrum half in place of Edwards, who is wanted by London Broncos. Gary Connolly has recovered from a knee ligament injury.

Kelvin Skerrett is on the Halifax bench for the visit to his former club. The prop signed a contract this week for the remainder of the season. Michael Jackson has overcome a back injury to start in the second row alongside Simon Baldwin, who switches from centre.

Salford Reds have already beaten Castleford Tigers this season, on their way to the Silk Cut Challenge Cup semi-finals. Tomorrow, Craig Randall and Paul Southern, who will make his first senior appearance for two years after breaking both legs, replace the injured Andy Platt and David Hulme in the pack.

Leeds Rhinos have Wayne Collins, the Australian hooker, one of six new overseas signings, fit again for the visit of Oldham Bears. "With the squad that we have put together, I don't think that the Leeds fans will see any lack of effort this season," Dean Bell, the Leeds coach, said.

In a reverse of the opening fixture last year, Sheffield Eagles entertain Paris Saint-Germain, winners 12 months ago, but with a new-look, all-Australian team.

SQUASH

Tippett leads new wave

FROM COLIN MCQUILLAN IN LINZ

AUSTRALIA'S control of top women's squash looks set to continue into the next generation on the evidence of the low-ranked women's tournament playing alongside the men's Austrian Open championship here.

The semi-finals yesterday featured Narelle Tippett, of Brisbane — previously a hefty junior struggling to make the grade internationally but now a slimmer, easy-moving world No 24 on the senior list, who was far too accomplished for Stephanie Brind, from Kent — and then the remarkable, identical Major twins from Orange in New South Wales.

With Jansher Khan, of Pakistan, meeting Julien Bonetat, of France, and Rodney Eyles, of Australia, facing Dan Jenson in the men's semi-finals, these young women hardly counted as the main event on the all-transparent court that is transfixing huge shopping crowds on the concourse of the stylish Arkade Centre.

However, with Tippett disposing of Brind 9-3, 9-4, 10-8 in 29 minutes and the left-handed Kate Major, ranked No 37 in the world, outlasting the right-handed Emma, ranked No 41, 9-6, 8-10, 9-0, 5-9, 9-2 over 75 minutes, it may have seemed clear even to the unversed Austrian audience which of the women should be returning to Linz in future at the head of the women's game.

SNOOKER

Bond as good as his word

FROM PHIL YATES IN BANGKOK

NIGEL BOND, who makes a habit of reserving optimum form for the latter stages of the season, required only 82 minutes to whitewash Quinten Hann, of Australia, 5-0 in the quarter-finals of the Thailand Open at the Century Park Hotel here yesterday. Bond, the runner-up in the 1995 world championship and winner of the British Open last April, gave Hann a harsh lesson in how difficult it can be to stop a leading player in full flow as he set up a meeting with Fergal O'Brien or Stephen Hendry, the world champion.

Hann, the unexpected conqueror of John Higgins, the world No 2, and Mark Williams, the Grand Prix title-holder, in the previous two rounds, virtually eradicated unforced errors as he illustrated the gulf in experience between the two.

"Quinten only made one mistake in each of the first four frames and that was enough," Bond, who quickly established a 4-0 lead with breaks of 50, 52, 93, and 74, said: "When I play my best, I know I can beat anybody in the game. I just wish I was a little bit more consistent."

It will be Bond's first appearance in the semi-finals of a world ranking tournament since the German Open in December and the stock of points that it guarantees is a considerable boost in his fight to remain a member of the games top 16 next season.

FOR THE RECORD

BASKETBALL

BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Leopards 95 Hemel and Watford 85; Sheffield 100 London Towers 89.
EUROLEAGUE: Men's elimination round: Efes Pilsen (Tur) 84 Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr) 83; Villeurbanne 75 Estudiantes Madrid 71, Cibona Zagreb (Cro) 61 Olimpija Ljubljana (Slovenia) 82; Olympiakos (Gr) 74 Partizan Belgrade (Yug) 69; Stefanel Milano (It) 78 Kinder Bologna (It) 76.
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Seattle 106 Minnesota 92; Dallas 109 Boston 107; Detroit 102 Denver 82; Golden State 101 Cleveland 95 (OT); Phoenix 112 LA Clippers 96; Toronto 103 Sacramento 98

BOWLS

BALLYMONEY: Home international indoor championships: Scotland bt Ireland 124-118 (Scotland skips first: J Muir lost to S Allen 18-29; G Robertson bt S Adamson 23-15; R Corsey bt J Baker 20-16; R McCulloch lost to D Corkill 11-23; A Marshall lost to R McCune 23-24; W Wood bt N Graham 29-11); Ireland bt Wales 129-103 (Ireland skips first: McCune bt R Weale 23-10; Graham bt P Rowlands 30-12; Allen bt S Rees 20-12; Adamson lost to J Greenslade 10-29; Baker lost to J Price 11-21; Corkill bt M Anstey 34-19).

CRICKET

SHEFFIELD SHIELD (second day of four): Sydney: Tasmania 483-7 dec (J Cox 143, M J DiVenuto 65, R T Ponting 64, D C Boon 52); New South Wales 220-3. Brisbane: Queensland 277 and 194-7; South Australia 180 (J D Siddons 82; M S Kasprowicz 5-64). Melbourne: Victoria 205; Western Australia 367-4 (M E Hussey 124 not out, R J Campbell 113, M W Goodwin 90).

CYCLING

PARIS-NICE RACE: Fifth stage (Coumon d'Auvergne to Venissieux, 197km): 1, T Steels (Bel) 5hr 20min 48sec; 2, M Cipollini (It); 3, L Jalabert (Fr); 4, J-J Henry (Fr); 5, C Capelle (Fr); 6, F Baldato (It) all same time. Overall: 1, Jalabert 18hr 07min 14sec; 2, P Chentleur (Fr) at 24sec; 3, Steels 28; 4, L Dufaux (Switz) 36; 5, D Rous (Fr) 40; 6, C Moreau (Fr) 47. 20, M Sciandri (GB) 1.06

FOOTBALL

SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE: Second division: Bristol Rovers 1 Crystal Palace 1
UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier division: Bishop Auckland 4 Lancaster 2. Cup: Third-round replay: Guiseley 0 Colwyn Bay 2
ICIS LEAGUE: Second division: Wivenhoe 1 Colne Row and Romford 3.
PONTIN'S LEAGUE: Premier division: Birmingham 1 Sheffield Wednesday 0
CENTRAL CONFERENCE LEAGUE: Stoke 1 Kidderminster 1
JEWSON EASTERN COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Halstead 0 Tiptree 2.
SCHOOLS MATCHES: Victory Shield Under-15 international match: Northern Ireland 0 England 3 (in Belfast). English Snickers Under-19 Trophy: Quarter-final: Oxford Coll 1 Weald Coll 3. English Goodyear Under-16 Trophy: Quarter-final: Norton 2, Newall Green 3
LIBERTADORES CUP: Group one: Cerro Porteno (Par) 2 Guarani (Par) 2; Bolivar (Bol) 3 Oriente Petrolero (Bol) 3. Group two: Nacional (Ecu) 1 Emelec (Ecu) 0; Velez Sarsfield (Arg) 1 Racing Club (Arg) 0. Group three: Colo Colo (Chile) 2 Universidad Catolica (Chile) 0; Minervon (Ven) 1 Mineros (Ven) 0. Group four: Gremio (Br) 0 Cruzeiro (Br) 1, Alianza (Peru) 1 Sporting Cristal (Peru) 1
FRENCH LEAGUE: Rennes 0 Monaco 3
SPANISH CUP: Quarter-finals, second leg: Celta Vigo 1 Racing Santander 0 (Celta win 3-1 on aggregate), Rayo Vallecano 1 Real Betis 2 (Betis win 4-1 on aggregate)

GOLF

AROEIRA: Portuguese Open: Leaders after two rounds: (Great Britain and Ireland unless stated). 132: M Jonzon (Swe) 67, 65. 134: W Riley (Aus) 68, 66, P O'Malley (Aus) 65, 69. 135: P Broadhurst 68, 67; V Phillips 67, 68. 136: S Grappasonni (It) 71, 65, M James 70, 66. 137: J M Olazábal (Sp) 70, 67, M A Jiménez (Sp) 69, 68. 139: R Russell 69, 69, D Hospital (Sp) 67, 71, P Affleck 69, 69; J Wade (Aus) 68, 70; M Davis 69, 69; P Lawrie 68, 70. 139: I Feliu (Sp) 71, 68; D Borrego (Sp) 69, 70; A Hunter 71, 68, P Quirici (Switz) 70, 69, M Roe 68, 71; I Pyman 70, 69, A Cejka (Ger) 69, 70. M Halfberg (Swe) 71, 68. P Lankah (Sp) 68, 71. R Lee 71, 68. 140: I Garrido (Sp) 69, 71. M Anglert (Swe) 66, 74. J Morales (Arg) 71, 69. M A Martin (Sp) 70, 70. A Sotomayor (Port) 67, 73. M Goggin (Aus) 71, 69. A Sandywell 70, 70. G Clark 69, 71. J Rivero (Sp) 71, 69. S Luna (Sp) 71, 69. D Lithopia (Swe) 72, 68. P Mitchell 70, 70.
CORAL SPRINGS: Florida: Honda Classic. Leading first round scores (United States unless stated): 67: L Janzen, P Stankowski. 68: T Montgomerie (GB), W R Brown (Ireland), P Newell, S Appleby (Aus). 69: D Martin, M Brantley, B Lietzke, J Huston, P Hoeft, P Blackmar, G Boros, R Black, J Durant, H Alarcon (Mex). 70: T Simpson, T Byron, B Langer (Ger), J Woosnam (GB), M McCumber, A Magee, C Beck, N Crosby (Sweden), R Gamez, R Mast. Other British score: 75: A Lyle
TUCSON, Arizona: LPGA Circle K Championship. Leading first round scores (United States unless stated): 64: L Neumann (Swe). 65: T Hair. 66: T Green. 67: S Steinhauer, A Sorenstam (Swe), M Mills. 68: K Tschetter, T Pepper, J Inkster, D Eggeling, T Barnett, D Andrews, C Nilsmark (Swe), A Dunn (Sp). Other European scores: 70: M Figueras Dotti (Sp), L Davies (GB), H Dobson (Ire). 71: C Sandelin (Swe), K Marsh (Ire), S Croce (It). 73: S Strudwick (GB), I Mattsson (Swe). 75: C Hj Koch (Swe). 76: F Descampe (Bel). 77: H Alfredsson (Swe).
ROEHAMPTON: Gold Cup. Leading scores: 143: J Lewis 73, 70. J Forbes 73, 70. 146: J Lewis 73, M Sutton 72. 74: W Dicks 73, 73. C Dutt 73, 73. S Moore 75, 71.

HOCKEY

KUALA LUMPUR: World Cup qualifying event: Semi-finals: South Korea 1 Poland 0; Spain 5 New Zealand 2.
MILTON KEYNES: Home nations youth tournament: Under-18: England 11 Wales 1. Ireland 3 Scotland 1. Under 16: Scotland 2 Ireland 2. England 3 Wales 0.

ICE HOCKEY

SUPERLEAGUE PLAY-OFFS: Group A: Manchester 5 Sheffield 1. Group B: Bracknell 5 Basingstoke 1.
PREMIER LEAGUE PLAY-OFFS: Slough 5 Kingston 2. Telford 6 Cardiff 3.
EUROPEAN JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP: Romania 2 Great Britain 3 (in Romania).
NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Montreal 3 Boston 0. Florida 5 Vancouver 4. New Jersey 6 Hartford 0. Philadelphia 5 Edmonton 4 (OT). NY Islanders 3 Tampa Bay 0. St Louis 4 Los Angeles 2

RUGBY LEAGUE

AUSTRALIAN LEAGUE (ARL): St George 14 Manly Warringah 18
AUSTRALIAN SUPER LEAGUE: Adelaide Rams 10 Hunter Mariners 8

RUGBY UNION

Super 12 tournament

NSW 25 Canterbury 8

New South Wales Waratahs: Tries: Manu 2. Pens, Burke 5. Canterbury Crusaders: Try Lilley. Pen: Lilley
(at Sydney)

STUDENT INTERNATIONAL MATCH: Welsh Universities 28 English Universities 17 (at Cardiff)

SNOOKER

BANGKOK: Thailand Open. Quarter-final: N Bond (Eng) bt Q Hann (Aus) 5-0

SKIING

VAIL, Colorado: Women's World Cup: Super giant slalom: 1, K Seizinger (Ger) 1 15.73; 2, H Gerg (Ger) 1min 16.53sec; 3, M Ertl (Ger) 1 17.01; 4, I Maiken (Nor) 1 17.07; 5, F Masnada (Fr) 1 17.28; 6, L Dalloz (Fr) 1 17.45. Final standings: 1, Gerg 490pts; 2, Seizinger 474; 3, P Wiberg (Swe) 449; 4, I Kostner (It) 355; 5, Ertl 248; 6, Masnada 221. Overall World Cup standings: 1, Wiberg 1,815pts; 2, Seizinger 1,284; 3, Gerg 1,100; 4, D Compagnoni (It) 827; 5, Kostner 783
VAIL: Men's World Cup: Super giant slalom: 1, A Schifrer (Austria) 1min 33.76sec; 2, J Strobl (Austria) 1.33.80; 3, K Girardini (It) 1.33.88; 4, L Cumanoo (It) 1.34.29; 5, K A Aamodt (Nor) 1.34.36; 6, D Rolfe (US) 1.34.40. Final standings: 1, L Alphand (Fr) 351pts; 2, J Strobl 333; 3, Schifrer 256; 4, H Maier (Austria) 230; 5, Girardini 218; 6, L Kjus (Nor) 203. Overall World Cup standings: 1, Alphand 1,119pts; 2, Aamodt 1,004; 3, Girardini 990; 4, J Strobl 961; 5, H Knauss (Austria) 727

SQUASH

LINZ: Austrian Open: Men: Quarter-finals: J Bonetat (Fr) bt G Ryding (Can) 11-15, 15-11, 15-6, 15-13. D Jenson (Aus) bt Z Jahan (Pak) 15-14, 15-8, 15-9; R Eyles (Aus) wo C Rowland (Aus), Jansher Khan (Pak) bt P Gregory (Gr) 15-12, 15-14, 5-15, 8-15, 15-6. Women: Quarter-finals: N Tippett (Aus) bt J Hickey (Aus) 9-1, 9-2, 9-2; S Brind (Eng) bt N Gatinger (SA) 1-9, 9-6, 4-9, 9-3, 9-7. K Major (Aus) bt A Hopps (Aus) 9-3, 9-2, 9-4; E Major (Aus) bt N Jans (Can) 1-9, 9-7, 10-8, 9-4. Semi-finals: Tippett bt Brind 9-3, 9-4, 10-8; K Major bt E Major 9-6, 8-10, 9-0, 5-9, 9-2

TABLE TENNIS

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS: Men: Seeds: 1, M Syed (Berkshire); 2, A Cooke (Derbyshire), 3, A Perry (Devon); 4, B Bellington (Derbyshire), 5, D Douglas (Warwickshire); 6, J Holland (Essex); 7, N Mason (Sussex); 8, D Blake (Surrey). Women: 1, A Holt (Lancashire); 2, N Deaton (Derbyshire), 3, H Lower (Staffordshire), 4, L Radford (Essex), 5, G Schwartz (Berkshire); 6, M Haynes (Nottinghamshire), 7, K Owobabi (Middlesex)

TENNIS

COPENHAGEN: Men's tournament: Second round: L Bürgsmuller (Ger) bt K Ulyett (SA) 3-6, 6-3, 6-4; M Damm (Cz) bt N Marques (Por) 6-3, 3-6, 6-3; G Raoux (Fr) bt D Prinosil (Ger) 7-6, 6-4; T Carbonell (Sp) bt K Carlsen (Den) 7-6, 7-6; F Fetterlein (Den) bt F Dewulf (Bel) 6-3, 7-6. Quarter-finals: K Kucera (Slovakia) bt Raoux 6-4, 6-2; Bürgsmuller bt Carbonell 6-4, 6-4; Damm bt Fetterlein 6-4, 6-3.
INDIAN WELLS, California: Men's tournament: Third round: M Chang (US) bt M Rosset (Switz) 6-2, 7-5; J Bjorkman (Swe) bt C Woodruff (US) 2-6, 7-5, 6-1. T Muster (Austria) bt S Dosedel (Cz) 6-4, 6-4; B Ulihrach (Cz) bt F Clavet (Sp) 7-5, 7-6. M Philippoussis (Aus) bt C Moya (Sp) 6-4, 6-3. B Black (Zim) bt G Kuerten (Br) 6-3, 6-3; A Berasategui (Sp) bt J Stark (US) 7-6, 6-3, C Pioline (Fr) bt M Larsson (Swe) 6-7, 6-2, 6-4
INDIAN WELLS: Women's tournament: Semi-final: I Spirlea (Rom) bt A Sánchez Vicario (Sp) 4-6, 6-3, 6-3

CRICKET 55
Gillespie gives Australia early advantage

SPORT

RUGBY LEAGUE 55
Codebreaker Offiah continues to set new trends

Emotional ties unravelling as tournament reaches crescendo in Paris and Cardiff

Moving moments ignite grand finale

BY DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

FAREWELL then, to the 1997 five nations' championship and to Cardiff Arms Park and the Parc des Princes, whose names have become synonymous with the tournament. Farewell to Jonathan Davies, whose sorcery graced the Arms Park on too few occasions, and probably to Will Carling, who twice led victorious England teams there.

The championship has this year become invested with a subtlety and an emotion rare even by its own standards. The twists of fate that have given Ireland a win in Cardiff, the French success at Twickenham and that have earned the away side victory in five of the eight matches so far may well be sustained today. France, meeting Scotland in Paris, are bidding for their fifth grand slam, while England go for the triple crown against Wales in Cardiff — and the championship, should they win and France falter. Throw into the melting pot the evocative farewells to great stadiums and great players and it should all make for a memorable weekend.

The Arms Park is not just pieces of concrete and stone, but a repository of memories, a theatre of dreams. That a superbly appointed ground will rise on some of the same foundations softens the blow, but it will not be the same for those misty-eyed folk who can look at this corner or that and remember Gareth's try, or Gerald's, or Ieuan's.

The Parc des Princes, a younger international stadium than its 113-year-old Welsh counterpart, has been home to French rugby for only 24 years and does not have the same history. Next season, the five nations' championship will travel to the north of Paris, to the St Denis suburb where the Stade de France is rising — but who would bet against an *au revoir* this afternoon that embraces the first grand slam to be won on French soil?

It is, perhaps, the year for a French rising. Their first grand slam, in 1968, was won in Cardiff, their next, in 1977, in Dublin. The third was at Twickenham in 1981, the fourth back in Dublin in 1987. Logically, 1997 would continue the sequence. Whether a team that has fallen into place around numerous injuries and suspension merits the lasting fame of a grand slam is neither here nor there, yet, if Scotland are to beaten, France must descend from the euphoria that accompanied the 23-20 win over England.

The Scots, on the crest of a one-match revival, won in Paris two years ago and have nothing to lose today. They will attack the fulcrum of the French side, the new half-back pairing of Guy Accoceberry and David Aucagne, and hope that Rowen Shepherd sustains the brilliant goal-kicking form he displayed against Ireland. "The only way to play the French is to take the game to them," Craig Chalmers, the Melrose stand-off half, said and, though they would be loathe to offer England favours, his team has the capacity to do so.

Adding piquancy to the occasion is the fact that, after today, there will be no more opportunities to impress those who will select the British Isles party to tour South Africa this summer. There was a strong Scottish presence in 1989 and 1993, not least in providing the captain, and Rob Wainwright has the prospect of following where Finlay Calder and Gavin Hastings went before.

Wales and England will offer greater numbers to the Lions, though few of the players will be thinking that far ahead. Indeed, England are more likely to be reflecting on what has been rather than what will be. The defeat by France was painful in the extreme and how the they deal with that should provide a clue to the eventual development of this England team.

They trained yesterday without Lawrence Dallaglio, who was confined to his room with a cold. Should he remain incapacitated, then Ben Clarke will play in the back row, with Chris Sheasby added to the replacement bench, but England are not unduly worried on that score. They will be more concerned that their half backs place a proper sense of order and balance upon the game, though in Mike Catt and Austin Healey they have a partnership of explosive, and possibly implosive, quality.

It is against all expectations that Christian Loader and David Young are propping at all, the former not having played for a month and the latter having been on crutches last week. Not that Kevin Bowring, the coach, wants to see his players in a physical battle. He wants Davies to draw the best from his midfield, though the loss of Scott Gibbs there and, further out, Ieuan Evans is a massive blow.

Evans is one of those intrigued by how England intend to play this game. There is an assumption that, for all the talk, England will try to grind the Welsh down, to win as they did in 1991 and 1995. Evans questions whether the visiting players truly believe in the fluid game they are said to seek, or understand what is required to play it successfully — which comes back to the perennial question of England's ability to read the shifts and nuances of a game.

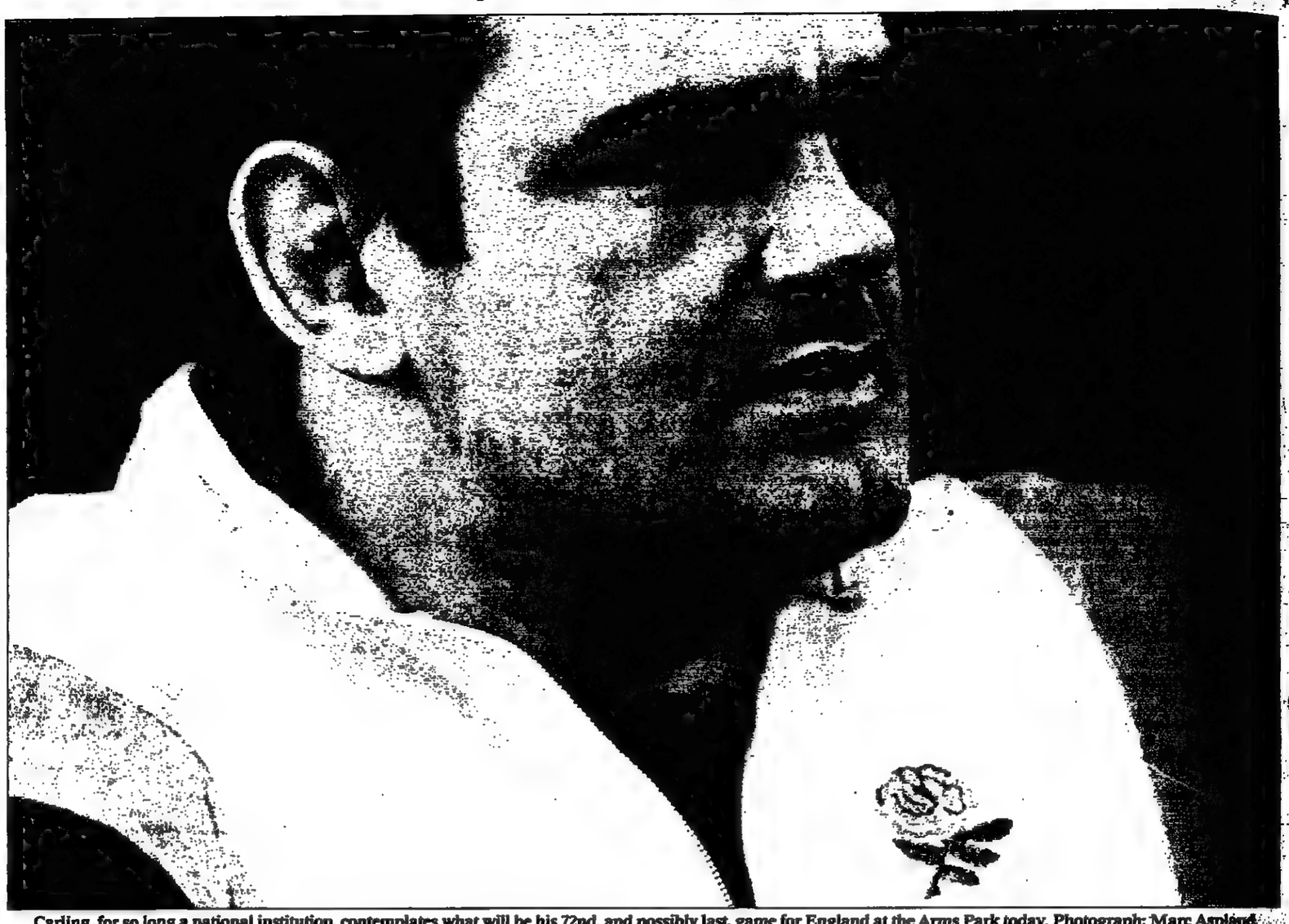
If their club performances three days after losing to France are any guide, England's forwards have already cleared away the mental hangover. There is a copper bottomed solidity to the pack that offers a safety net should the backs lose their way and, if Catt's kicking is variable, then both his centres can help.

Jack Rowell, the England coach, has given no indication as yet to being a convert to the regular use of replacement players, but how tempted will he be to bring on Rob Andrew if his team shows signs of stress? How much, in fact, hangs on long-term development, rather than short-term prizes? Jonathan Davies v Rob Andrew and 1985 revisited. That would be the ultimate farewell.

FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	3	3	0	0	82	57	6
England	3	2	0	1	107	42	4
Wales	3	1	0	2	81	72	2
Scotland	3	1	0	2	70	85	2
Ireland	4	1	0	3	57	141	2

RESULTS: Ireland 15 France 32; Scotland 19 Wales 34, England 41 Scotland 13; Wales 15 Ireland 26, France 27 Wales 22, Ireland 6 England 46, England 20 France 22; Scotland 38 Ireland 10



Carling, for so long a national institution, contemplates what will be his 72nd, and possibly last, game for England at the Arms Park today. Photograph: Marc Aspland

CARDIFF TEAMS

WALES		ENGLAND
N R Jenkins (Pontypridd)	15	T R G Stimpson (Newcastle)
S D Hill (Cardiff)	14	J M Sleightholme (Bath)
A G Bateman (Richmond)	13	W D C Carling (Harlequins)
N G Davies (Llanelli)	12	P R de Glanville (Bath)*
G Thomas (Bridgend)	11	T Underwood (Newcastle)
J Davies (Cardiff)	10	M J Catt (Bath)
R Howley (Cardiff)	9	A Healey (Leicester)
C D Loader (Swansea)	1	G C Rowntree (Leicester)
J M Humphreys (Cardiff)*	2	M P Regan (Bristol)
D Young (Cardiff)	3	J Leonard (Harlequins)
S M Williams (Neath)	6	L B N Dallaglio (Wasps)
G O Llewellyn (Harlequins)	4	M O Johnson (Leicester)
M J Voyle (Llanelli)	5	S D Shaw (Bristol)
K P Jones (Ebbw Vale)	7	R A Hill (Saracens)
L S Quinnell (Richmond)	8	T A K Rodber (Northampton/Army)

Referee: J Dumé (France) — BBC1: 2.45pm — * captain

REPLACEMENTS: 16 W T Proctor (Llanelli), 17 P John (Pontypridd), 18 J C Quinnell (Richmond), 19 D L M McIntosh (Pontypridd), 20 S C John (Llanelli), 21 G R Jenkins (Swansea).

REPLACEMENTS: 16 J C Guscott (Bath), 17 C R Andrew (Newcastle), 18 A C T Gomarsall (Wasps), 19 B B Clarke (Richmond), 20 D J Garforth (Leicester), 21 P B T Greening (Gloucester)

PARIS TEAMS

FRANCE		SCOTLAND
J-L Sadourny (Colomiers)	15	R J S Shepherd (Melrose)
L Leflamand (Bourgoin)	14	A G Stanger (Hawick)
C Lamaison (Brive)	13	A V Tait (Newcastle)
S Glas (Bourgoin)	12	G P J Townsend (Northampton)
D Venditti (Brive)	11	K M Logan (Wasps)
D Aucagne (Pau)	10	C M Chalmers (Melrose)
G Accoceberry (Bègles-Bordeaux)	9	B W Redpath (Melrose)
D Casadei (Brive)	1	T J Smith (Watsonians)
M Dalmaso (Agen)	2	D G Ellis (Currie)
F Tournaire (Narbonne)	3	M J Stewart (Northampton/Army)
A Benazzi (Agen)*	6	R I Wainwright (Watsonians/Army)*
O Merle (Montferrand)	4	G W Weir (Newcastle)
H Miorin (Toulouse)	5	A I Reed (Wasps)
O Magne (Dax)	7	I R Smith (Moseley)
F Pelous (Dax)	8	P Walton (Newcastle)

Referee: E F Morrison (England) — BBC1: 2pm — * captain

REPLACEMENTS: 16 P Bondouy (Narbonne), 17 U Mola (Dax), 18 P Carbonneau (Brive), 19 R Castel (Béziers), 20 J-L Jordana (Toulouse), 21 M de Rougemont (Toulon)

REPLACEMENTS: 16 I C Glasgow (Heriot's FP), 17 D W Hodge (Watsonians), 18 G Armstrong (Newcastle), 19 D F Cronin (Wasps), 20 P H Wright (Melrose), 21 S J Brotherstone (Melrose).

Waddle pulls out of Bradford squad

BY RICHARD HOBSON

BRADFORD City remained adamant yesterday that Chris Waddle will stay with them for the rest of the season after the player pulled out of the squad that travelled to Reading for their Nationwide League first division game today. The move by Waddle came the day after his proposed transfer to Nottingham Forest fell through.

The former England player believes that Bradford reneged on a verbal agreement that allowed him to move to the FA Carling Premiership club on a free transfer and made no attempt to hide his disappointment on Thursday night. Yesterday morning, he told Chris Kamara, the Bradford manager, that he had been struck by illness and would not be well enough to train or play.

He is expected to recover by Monday, when he is due to fly to Monte Carlo as part of the BBC commentary team for the Uefa Cup game between AS Monaco and Newcastle United, which takes place 24 hours later. Coincidentally, Monte Carlo is the home of Irving Scholar, the Forest football consultant, who set up the proposed deal with Mel Stein, Waddle's agent.

As Dave Bassett, the Forest general manager, confirmed that the matter was closed, Bradford adopted a conciliatory tone in taking Waddle's explanation in good faith. Geoffrey Richmond, the chairman, said: "When he gets over these events, I believe every inclination in his body will be to play football and give his all for Bradford. I can understand why he might be a bit upset and not in the right frame of mind to play at the moment."

For the second day running, Forest were frustrated when a proposed signing fell through. Yesterday, they failed to secure the loan surfaces of Brian O'Neill, the Scotland midfield player, from Celtic, to the annoyance of both Bassett and the player, who had flown from Glasgow in the morning to train at the City Ground. "Celtic had all morning to get the registration papers to us in time for him to play against Liverpool, but they failed to do that. They must have tried to send their pigeon, it is a disgrace," Bassett said. Forest will attempt to resurrect the deal next week.

Tommy Johnson, the Aston Villa striker, will tell Derby County on Monday whether he will return to the Baseball Ground after leaving 26 months ago. The clubs have agreed a fee of £2 million, with Villa receiving a further £250,000 if Derby avoid relegation from the Premiership. "I am not really optimistic about Tommy coming," Jim Smith, the Derby manager, said.

He is more hopeful of obtaining permits for the Costa Rica pair, Parlo Cesar Wanchope and Mauricio Solis, before the end of the month. The pair will sign from Sporting Herediano in a deal worth £1.2 million over three years subject to Home Office clearance.

Derby have decided not to sign Marino Rahmberg, the Sweden international, who has been at the Baseball Ground on a two-month trial. However, they may take on Scott Huckerby, the younger brother of Darren Huckerby, of Coventry City, who plays for Ilkeston Town in the Dr Martens League.

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Ferguson thrives on title toil

BY PETER BALL AND RUSSELL KEMPSON

ALEX FERGUSON, the Manchester United manager, may be prone to the occasional emotional outburst, but if he is feeling the pressure as the FA Carling Premiership race enters its final phase, he is not showing it. Even the 2-1 defeat against Sunderland at Roker Park last weekend appears to have been forgotten.

United, who play Sheffield Wednesday at Old Trafford this afternoon, also have an important date in Portugal on Wednesday — the return leg of their European Cup quarter-final against FC Porto. Again, and perhaps because of United's stirring 4-0 victory in the first leg, Ferguson appears calm and in control.

"We made a mistake last week because we had a four-point cushion," Ferguson said. "That's brought us back to a position we're used to, a neck-and-neck, dog-eat-dog situation. I think that's what these players need to keep them alive. I think they take a perverse pleasure out of it."

United still lead Liverpool by a point and Ferguson's good humour has been helped by the knowledge that, apart from the suspended Roy Keane, he has a full squad to pick from for almost the first time this season. "We've had more than our share of injuries, so it's satisfying to get them all back," he said. "I've that many options, it leaves me with the problem of picking a team."

Nicky Butt, the United midfield player, sees only Liverpool and possibly Arsenal as realistic challengers for the Premiership crown. "I said a couple of weeks ago that I thought it would come down to us and Liverpool," he said. "Although Arsenal could be contenders, because I think they have a good run-in, the others can't afford to make a single mistake now."

Brighton, the Nationwide League third division club, may shelve plans to share Gillingham's Priestfield Stadium. They have to leave the Goldstone Ground at the end of the season, but are now considering temporarily transferring to Hove greyhound stadium.

Discussions have taken place between Coral, the bookmaker, which owns the greyhound stadium, and the consortium that is attempting to take control of Brighton. The deal hinges on construction of a temporary stand to increase the capacity to 6,000. Peter Shotton, the stadium managing director, said: "If an offer was made that could not be refused, then we would not refuse it."

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SATURDAY MARCH 15 1997

Janine di Giovanni celebrates the enduring power of every daughter's love for the first man in her life

In the name of the father

Yesterday I fell asleep in the afternoon and *dreamt again of my* father. In the dream he was ten years younger than he was at the time he died, fuller in the face, fleshier, darker, with more hair. He looked nervous: perspiring and twitching slightly when I greeted him, a little sheepish as though embarrassed to be seen in such a state. But he motioned me to move closer, smiled and said my name, using the diminutive. His voice was soft and familiar, a timbre and resonance that I had heard practically every day of my life until last year when, terribly and abruptly, it stopped.

"Dad," I said, surprised, to the man in my dream. "What are you doing here? You're dead."

"I'm not dead," he said. "Who told you I was dead?"

I stared at him, confused in the way that one is often confused in dreams. Perhaps my father was not really dead after all. Perhaps the six months of hell, of the diagnosis, the cancer, the hospital, the flights twice a month back and forth to America, and finally, the death and the funeral, had all been a horrible fantasy.

"I'm not dead," he repeated, with emphasis. He smiled oddly. "*I'm just in the next room.*"

It took me a minute to digest this. *I'm not dead. I'm just in the next room.* I found it oddly comforting, a sign that he would never be far from me. And then, inspired by the intimacy of the moment, I asked him to tell me something good about the future, because I was not very happy. He paused, and then answered. The message he gave would mean nothing on this page, but it meant a great deal to me in *the dream. It was a strange and* prophetic message of hope: something that perhaps in life he would not have been able to tell me, because he might have been embarrassed.

I WAS a fortunate child. Put simply, I loved my father, and he loved me, and he told me often. But there was still an awkwardness between us that had developed during my adolescence, something to do with puberty and burgeoning sexuality and the fact that my father was an old-fashioned, stern European father. There were 45 years between us and I often felt those years when we argued about marriage or religion or divorce or birth control.

Growing up with him was not easy. In one sense, he wanted us to be American children and embrace the stars and stripes, to march in the Fourth of July parades and join the Girl Scouts. On the other hand, he was terrified of the family becoming too modern, too assimilated, and thus losing our Italian identity and our strong sense of family, forever. For this reason, he was strict and forced us to live in an artificial environment which never fell into step with the changing world outside.

It created a schizophrenic, and often bizarre household, where the women stayed in the kitchen standing over pots of things that smelled amazing, and the men sat waiting to be served. Outside, the women's liberation movement and the summer of love was taking place, but inside my house, men were men and women were women, and we had to be home for Sunday lunch.

When I told a friend that I had been commissioned to write a book about my father, she said immediately: "Was he very famous? Or was he very strange?" The answer is no. He was not a Hollywood producer or a newspaper magnate or a liar from East Texas or a gambler. Despite our name and the fact that he was born in Italy, he was not in the Mafia.

As far as I know, he never cheated on my mother and never deliberately lied to my brothers and my sister and me. He did not achieve the greatest heights in his career, and he was probably not entirely satisfied with his life or his family.

If I had to list his achievements, it would probably be that he fathered seven children and, when he died, six were still living and six grieved his death in a way that we will probably never grieve anyone else again. And those six were left with the strongest sense of a father that one could possibly have.

Janine di Giovanni with her father shortly before he died, and (inset) as his smallest fan

I also know that when he died at the age of 76, he died worried. He was worried about leaving my mother alone after nearly six decades. They had been childhood sweethearts, and the only times they were separated when we were small children was when we spent the summers at the beach with my mother while he worked in the City. Even though they were only apart during the week, he wrote long, tearful love letters to her, which I found in my mother's bedside table tied with a pink satin ribbon.

I know he was worried, because the week before he died, my mother and I were in the house alone with him, and he began to have a terrible,

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SERIOUS SHOPPING | HARDWARE

Frank Worthington, the Seventies talented maverick wayward rebel footballer to beat all others, the one who looked like late-period Elvis, was asked by the magazine *Shoot!* in about 1975 what was his favourite pastime. His answer has stuck in my mind.

"Browsing round hardware shops," said Frank. One boy's mother wrote to complain. Her son took the interviews in *Shoot!* extremely seriously. He did not care for them to be satirised by heroes such as Frank — whose favourite pastime should, by tradition, have been golf, golf — and more golf.

Yet my growing experience of the ironmongery retail sector over the past two decades indicates that Frank was right. Browsing round hardware shops is indeed a rewarding way to spend time. Like reading poetry, writing letters to friends in foreign countries, or finding out about wine, browsing round hardware shops is one of those things that, in a perfect world, I would do a lot more of.

A fortnight ago, a few jobs came up that were so small, so easy, that I could not in all conscience contract any of them out to any one of the builders, painters, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, carpet-fitters, bath re-enamellers or window cleaners that have come to regard my house as a sort of convenient cashpoint to stop off at as they move around London.

Having a limited supply of tools, I found myself in the local hardware shop. One of the best things about these shops is that they always have what you want. This is quite a rare experience for the shopper, for whom the opportunity to exchange money for precisely what he desires is limited. Shopkeepers large and small often seem unable and/or unwilling to sell you what you want to buy.

The situation has improved dramatically in recent years, thanks largely to the spread of shops owned by people originating from the Indian sub-continent, who understand that the idea of shopkeeping is to have things other people want to buy and then be willing to sell them.

Such a man runs my local hardware shop. He is living proof that there is such a thing as a

ROBERT CRAMPTON

talent for shopkeeping. There are untalented, modestly talented and hugely talented shopkeepers just as footballers, bath re-enamellers or writers have differing degrees of ability. And then there are geniuses. My local hardware man — he can be found at the north end of Broadway Market, Hackney, east London — is one such genius. More than a genius — a magician. He stocks *everything*, and can point to where it all is, in the time it takes to say Hoover bags.

Given that his shop is about the size of an average spare bedroom, say 12ft square, it is of course very crowded, the whole trove covered with a light patina of dust. Taking the two steps that get you from the door to the counter, my head came into hard contact with an overhanging kettle. That kettle hit the kettle next to it, which hit the next one, setting up a clanging kettle domino effect, like an avant-garde musical instrument. Or one of those metal-balls-on-wires executive toys that you don't see anymore.

The shopkeeper giggled. "I've got a list," I said. He went serious, clasped his hands across his large, dungareed stomach, and prepared to perform, like Pavarotti clearing his throat.

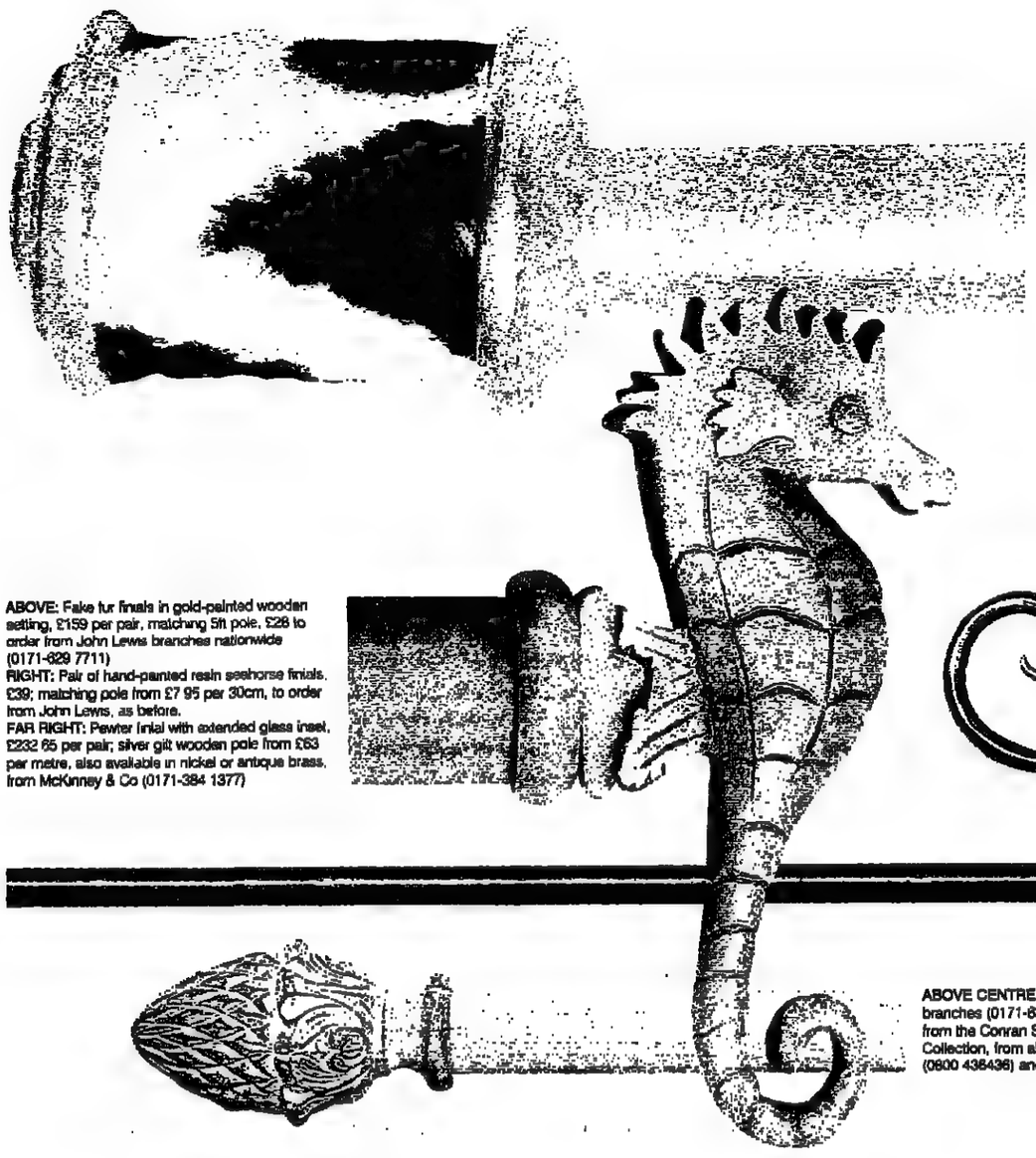
I said: "I want three of those cylindrical lightbulbs, 240mm, 30watt, opaque." They were on the counter before I had finished speaking. "A padlock." He slapped three down to choose from. "Some sandpaper." He gestured to a display. "Pliers, cutting ones." Instantly, he was twirling a pair in his fingers, miming a cutting action. "Wire, not too thick." A coil of that very thing dropped on to the growing pile of goods between us. "Masonry nails, biggish, not those ones like miniature chisels that destroy your house." He pointed. A little box all but levitated off a shelf and floated over, just the right size.

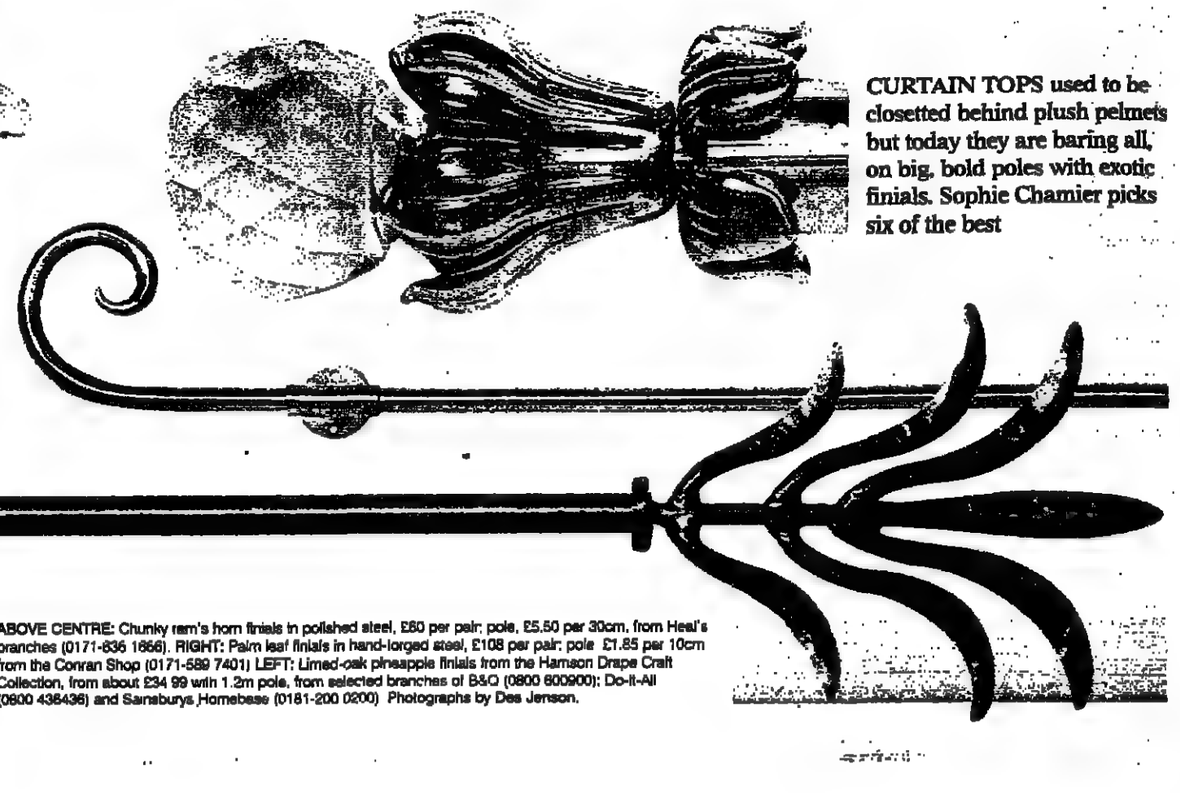
"And a dustbin." A son was dispatched, a range produced, a bin selected, a suggestion made and accepted that perhaps the other items be placed therein, a bill flourished, a banknote transferred, a virtuosity observed, like when studio audiences used to applaud Ronnie Barker's *tour de force* monologues.

Not much time for browsing — but somewhere, I am sure, Frank Worthington ran his fingers through his quiff and smiled.

POLES APART

CURTAIN TOPS used to be closetted behind plush pelmets but today they are baring all, on big, bold poles with exotic finials. Sophie Chamier picks six of the best





ABOVE: Fake fur finials in gold-painted wooden setting, £159 per pair, matching 5ft pole, £26 to order from John Lewis branches nationwide (0171-629 7711)
RIGHT: Pair of hand-painted resin seahorse finials, £39; matching pole from £7 95 per 30cm, to order from John Lewis, as before.
FAR RIGHT: Pewter finial with extended glass inset, £232 65 per pair; silver gilt wooden pole from £63 per metre, also available in nickel or antique brass, from McKinney & Co (0171-384 1377)

ABOVE CENTRE: Chunky ram's horn finials in polished steel, £60 per pair; pole, £5.50 per 30cm, from Heal's branches (0171-636 1666). RIGHT: Palm leaf finials in hand-forged steel, £108 per pair; pole £1.85 per 10cm from the Conran Shop (0171-589 7401) LEFT: Limed-oak pineapple finials from the Hamson Drape Craft Collection, from about £34 99 with 1.2m pole, from selected branches of B&Q (0800 600900); Do-it-All (0800 436436) and Sainsburys Homebase (0181-200 0200) Photographs by Des Jenson.

'He never, even in the grips of terrible disease, forgot the role of provider'

Continued from page 1

racking, attack. My mother was frightened, as she leaned over to examine him. At that moment, he caught her necklace, a fragile diamond heart on a long silver chain, in one scrawny hand, and looked at her, through the pain, and said: "Catherine. You're so pretty." I also know he was worried because the next day, he called me into his room and asked me, the youngest child, to look after her.

He was also worried that those of us in my family who had not yet turned into grown-ups would run even wilder if his presence was not somewhere in the world looking out for us. I know this because he asked my older sister, who lives 5,000 miles away, to take care of me. He never, even in the grips of the most terrible wasting disease, forgot the role of provider.

Which, if my father was anything, was what he was: a provider.

So what did this all mean for me? I know there are women who have been burdened by the strength of this paternal love, repressed and unable to crawl out of the shadow of a powerful father. Theodora Burr, daughter of the American revolutionary hero Aaron, wrote to her father: "You appear to me so superior, so elevated above other men. I contemplate you with a strange mixture of humility, admiration, reverence, love, pride, that very little superstition would be necessary to make me worship you as a superior being . . . I had rather not live than not be the daughter of such a man."

I always thought I did not feel like that: but on some level, I did and still do. When I was 21, I fell in love with someone and married shortly after. I felt, oddly enough, as if I were sleepwalking through the entire thing.

I was stunned, moving in slow motion, like someone who had been injected with a painkiller, yet I knew it was something I had to do, because in the world in which I had been brought up women needed men to look after them.

"I can't believe I'm only going to do this once in my life," I said. An odd thing for a bride-to-be to say. But my father was not shocked. He said, 'I understand'."

I separated from my husband after eight years in the way a child separates from their family when they are sent to boarding school for the first time. It was not easy, but I knew it was necessary. And it was only after some time that I realised that I had married a man who was extraordinarily similar to my father: kind, sensitive, gentle. He looked after me in a selfless and unconditional way, and being near him gave me a feeling of supreme confidence, as though nothing in the world could possibly go wrong. He was a rock.

After that, I spent a lot of time with people who were not rocks. They were clingers. Yet the week that my father was diagnosed with terminal cancer and given less than six months to live, I met the person I am now with. Like my father, he is Italian (the first Italian I have gone out with), and he has many of the same characteristics: difficult, stubborn, sensitive.

It seems an ironic, and sad emotional circle, and that first summer we were together was filled with terrible conflicting emotions: joy and sadness, new beginnings and heartbreaking endings. It was the best summer on record for 40

Janine di Giovanni: an adult at last

years, and every day we went out to breakfast in the sunshine. We were there the morning that my father died, when I was standing in the queue waiting for the coffee, and I suddenly got a sharp pain in my chest and, despite the heat, felt icy cold, and I got the bill and raced home. I called the hospital in America, and found out my father had died, minutes before, in his bed overlooking the river which ran into the part of the sea where he had taught me to swim.

My boyfriend had raced back home with me and was standing behind me while I spoke to my brother on the phone. I put the phone down and put my head down on my desk and cried, and then he and I sat downstairs and said nothing. Later, I said my only regret was that my father died before they could meet.

For many months, my father's death haunted me, mostly because he had died a terrible death. For an athlete who had spent his life in motion, he spent his last six months in bed, emaciated, barely able to walk to and from his bed. He hated television, forbade us to watch it as children, and so what upset me the most when I came home a few weeks before he died was to find him lying on the sofa covered by a blanket, watching afternoon cooking shows with glazed, drugged eyes. He could not eat because of the ulcers in his mouth, and the chemotherapy made him nauseous, so he was denied the food he loved the most: the special pasta my mother had been taught to make by his mother, clams which he had taught us to dig from the beach near our house. Denying him things that he loved seemed to kill him bit by bit and it was terrible to watch. He could not go to walk by the sea, so the priest came to our house and said Mass while my father lay in bed, a small grey face against the whiteness of the pillow. During the "Our Father", I began to cry and my brother elbowed me, in the way he had when we were children.

In the second week of October last year, my brother and I drove our father to the hospital to die. It was his favourite month: the month when the foliage explodes on the east coast of America, but he was not watching the trees. His eyes were straight ahead on the road. I sat behind him in the car, memorising the way the last of his hair fell above his ear, and touching his hand so that I could imprint the feeling of what it was like to hold it in my hand. He complained that he did not want to be petted like a dog, but he did not pull his hand away. One of my brothers, who is a doctor, told me not to stray too far from home, but we had no idea how quickly the end would happen. Within days, it would turn out; we just knew that we were taking him away from his home, which he loved, from my mother, who was at home crying and packing his case, from his flower beds, from his books, and from us.

When I said goodbye to him in his hospital bed, I kept thinking: look at him as though this is the last time. Listen to his voice so that you will always remember it. But it is difficult to imagine loss before it actually happens, or to know how empty you really feel when it finally comes.

The day he died, my boyfriend and I went to Brompton Oratory in London to light two candles, one for him, one for us. Afterwards, I ate lunch in an Italian restaurant nearby and ordered *bruschetta*, which my father had given me to eat as a child, and thought that for the first time in my life, I felt like an adult. Because childhood is, as Edna St Vincent Millay wrote, the place where no one ever dies.

● *Janine di Giovanni's book,* The Fall of Rome: An American Family 1945-1995, *will be published next year by Orion.*

Hide and SLEEK

Suede is back, but this time its light, bright, fluid looks have made it fun and easy to wear, says Heath Brown

LEFT: Pale green suede belted jacket, £495; matching straight-leg trousers, £295, from a selection by Whistles, 12 St Christopher's Place, W1 (0171-487 4484) **RIGHT:** Pale green cotton knit top, £58, John Smedley, Harrods, Knightsbridge, SW1 (0171-580 5075). Red suedette skirt, £23.99, Absolute Leather, available at Miss Selfridge, 221-223 Oxford Street, W1 and selected branches (0171-637 9526)

Suedes and suedettes are this season's antidote to sheen and shine fashions. The appeal of suede, and its imitators, is its sense of discreet luxury. It is also durable and thus a good investment, even though it can prove to be pretty expensive.

The newer and less pricey suedettes and moleskins have come a long way. They are supple and more pliable than older versions, which were hard to manipulate and had an almost thick, paper-like quality.

Today, what can be made from these fabrics is limitless. Trouser suits lend themselves well to this genre and the huge range of skirt styles and lengths available is given a different edge depending on the fluidity of the material used.

Traditional styles in suede have changed. The old image of heavy tan jackets and bulky double stitched jeans that thicken up your silhouette has gone and lighter, more fluid looks have made suede as flattering as any fabric. This summer's flimsy chiffon blouses and thin jersey trousers can be worn with a coat or skirt in suede. Fine-gauge knit cotton tops and flat colour knits are also the perfect accompaniment. If you cannot bear to be seen without a blast of this season's essential sheen, you can contrast with a hint of shiny satin or nylon, for a contradictory look.

As ever, accessories can be found in suede and suedette. Multi-coloured mules, soft grey sandals and strappy platform shoes come in muted tones and more delicate styles. Bags are fringed and slashed in brighter colours and made into more unusual shapes and belts are pale and pastel. Even jewellery gets a look-in with thonged suede disc pendants found at more craftsy outlets.

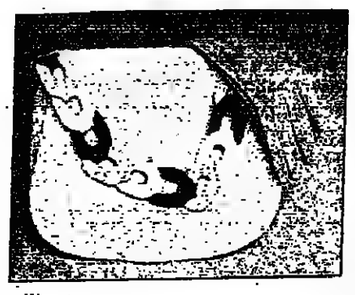
Photographs by **Richard Burns.** Hair and make-up by **Sally Kvalheim** for Jo Hansford. Styling by **Amandip Uppal**

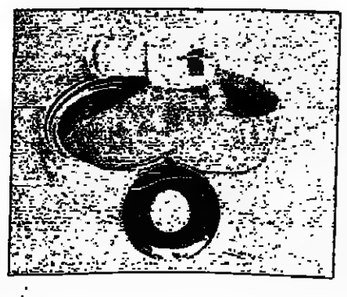
ABOVE: Pale blue suedette trousers, £45, Jigsaw (0171-491 4484). Multicolour suede belt, £35, Otto Glanz, Harrods, Knightsbridge, SW1 (0181-365 1711). Navy cardigan with collar, £50, French Connection, branches nationwide (0171-580 2507). Blue snakeskin strappy suede wedge shoes, £135, Russell & Bromley, selected branches (0171-629 6903). Purple suede fringe bag, from £42, Dollargrand, Selfridges, W1 (0171-794 3028)

BELOW LEFT: Lime suede bag, £55, Red or Dead, branches nationwide (0171-235 1335). Hot pink suede gloves, £35, Fenwicks, W1 (0171-629 9161)

BELOW MIDDLE: Red suede belt, £25; orange suede round buckle belt, £39, Otto Glanz, Harrods, W1 (0181-365 1711) Purple wide hairband and matching blue hairband, £9.95, Selfridges, W1 (0171-629 1234)

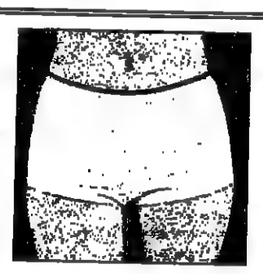
BELOW RIGHT: Red suede criss-cross platform shoe £37.99, Ravel, branches nationwide (0171-631 0224) Blue suede flat mules, £95.50, by K. Jacques for Russell & Bromley (0171-629 6903). Pale grey suede wedge flip flop, £165, Gina, SW1 (0171-235 2932)



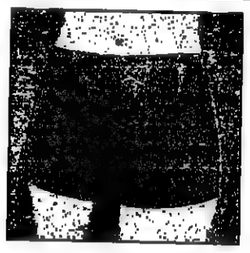


THREE OF A KIND

A VPL (Visible Panty Line) is no longer a fashion faux pas. Big knickers worn beneath sheer clothing are there to be seen in dark or bright colours. Here are our choices. H.B.



Cream pants with black trim, £52, by Karl Lagerfeld from Boisvert, (0171-409 1721)



Red cotton pants, £9.99, Knickerbox, branches nationwide (0171-284 1744)

Blue denim-look cotton pants, £13.99, Gossard, stores nationwide (0171-331 4519)

Many people are put off property auctions, but there are excellent rewards for those who do their homework

Going, going, gone for a bargain

When the auctioneer's hammer falls, the highest bidder is bound by contract to buy. One of the main advantages of buying property at auction is the certainty: neither the seller nor the buyer can change their mind and the delays and frustrations associated with buying a house by the more usual means are mainly eliminated.

Then there is the excitement and competitive atmosphere of the auction room generated by the scent of a bargain, rarely experienced in an estate agent's showroom or a lawyer's office.

"There is still a mystique surrounding the auction room," says Bill Petch, an auctioneer for 30 years. "And although it is a myth that if you scratch your nose or blink your eyes you may find you've bought something very expensive, auctions do create tensions and emotions."

Pauline Sumner, 30, who has bought four properties at auction, enjoys that atmosphere. "The buzz gets to you, especially when you are buying," she says. "You know how much money you have to spend, and you know what leeway you have. You have to try to read the auction, without giving away too much about your own intentions."

Mrs Sumner, who launched Cavendish Property Services to buy, rent, renovate and sell properties, is usually among a minority of women at the property auctions she attends. "You often have builders on one side, big businessmen on the other and a few individuals like me in between."

If she is buying for investment, she follows her own strict rules: "I arrange the finance in advance and set my limits in my head."

But when Mrs Sumner was house-hunting for her own family, things were different. Married with two sons, she needed a property big enough to accommodate the family and her grandmother, who lives with her, and enough land for her to stable a horse. With her husband, Michael, she found a whitewashed farmhouse, dating from 1860, set in an acre of land near the Fylde coast in Lancashire.

"We liked it straight away. It gave us the space we needed inside, and the land outside which we'd never had before. But even when we heard it was going for auction, I was convinced it would be out of our price range." For that reason Mrs Sumner, who in the past had always obeyed the essential rule of arranging funding before the auction, was unprepared.

"I was so sure it would go above our limit that we weren't organised," she says. "It was so frustrating because we couldn't bid." But when the property did not reach its reserve price and was withdrawn, Mrs Sumner stepped in with an offer that was accepted.

BUYERS' GUIDE

- Inspect the property, have it surveyed and study the documentation held by the auctioneers in advance.
- Arrange funding and be prepared to pay a 10 per cent deposit on the day.
- Check on the day of the auction that the property has not been withdrawn or sold in advance.
- Know your financial limits and stick to them.
- Arrange for the property to be insured from the date of the auction.

Preparation is essential, according to all auctioneers. Roy Pugh & Company of Preston, Lancashire, which last year sold properties that realised more than £12.8 million, publishes a question and answer guide to buying at auction in its catalogues.

Auctioneers advise anyone planning to buy a property to have it surveyed in advance to help them to determine its value and structural condition. "The cost of a survey may be money they will lose if they are not the successful bidder, but the risk of that is far outweighed by the potential problems of buying a property without knowing its full history," Roy Pugh says.

"It is also essential that potential buyers arrange funding in advance — if a mortgage or a loan is needed, they must know the money has been agreed," Mr Pugh says. "Once the hammer falls, they are bound by the contract."

A deposit of 10 per cent is required on the day of the auction, with the balance being paid usually within 28 days and sometimes earlier.

Rob Spears, a pollution control manager, checked those details before he attended his first auction, hoping to buy a modern five-bedroom house in need of renovation after living in rented accommodation since he moved to Newcastle upon Tyne.

Because we were still trying to sell our last house in South Yorkshire, we needed something we could afford without that sale," he says. "I set myself a maximum price before the auction, but there was pressure on me on the day because there was another couple in the room who obviously wanted the house, too."

The house in a former Northumberland mining village was originally offered for sale through an estate agent at about £90,000, but was reduced after water damage.

"When we reached the guide price, we both carried on bidding," he says. "There was some tension and, once I had reached our limit, I started to feel the pressure. In the end I went up another £3,500. When I saw the other couple leave the room, I sensed they had gone beyond their limit."

Many people are still reluctant to try their hand at a property auction, believing the private treaty route is safer. But Mr Petch, a Royal Insurance Property Services auctioneer, says: "If people get themselves organised in good time, they can pick up a good deal. A property is often put to auction because it has been difficult to sell and there are bargains to be had."

But setting a limit is vital. Mr Petch says that seasoned buyers and speculators know when to stop, but first-timers can allow emotions to affect their bidding.

LYNNE GREENWOOD

HOWARD BARLOW

Pauline Sumner with son Paul at their farmhouse, dating from 1860, in an acre of land near the Fylde coast in Lancashire. "It is vital to prepare for a bid"

PROPERTY NEWS

Fab Four barber shop sale

THE Penny Lane barber's shop where the Beatles first had their famous haircuts is one of the star lots at Bonhams' "Beatles for Sale" memorabilia auction on March 22, *Amanda Loose writes*. The terraced building in Liverpool has an unoccupied hairdressing salon on the ground, first and second floors, and a flat above. Guide price £300,000. Contact Allsop & Co on 0171-494 3686.

■ NEW house prices have risen by 5.8 per cent over the past year, according to the Halifax. The average price of a new house was £71,757 last month, while the price paid by first-time buyers rose by 2.1 per cent to £48,168, 5 per cent higher than a year ago. Previous owner-occupiers now pay an average of £76,314.

■ GRADE II listed Faraday House, once home to chemist and physicist Michael Faraday, who was given it as part of his pension by Queen Victoria, is for sale for about £475,000. The four or five-bedroom house at Hampton Court dates from the late 17th and early 18th century. Contact John D. Wood on 0181-944 7172.

■ THE rentals market is booming in Kensington and Chelsea, west London, as the shortage of properties for sale means many people are unable to find the right house to buy, says Egerton.

■ THE former home at St John's Wood, north London, of Boy George's drummer, John Moss, is for sale for £1.25 million. Danish jazz musician Allan Botschinsky and his wife Marion Kaempfert currently live in the 1843 studio house, which boasts walled gardens, galleried reception rooms and two bedrooms. Contact Goldschmidt & Howland on 0171-724 4404.

■ TOP-FLOOR flats in central London are worth nearly double the same flat at ground floor level, according to Savills. The price per square foot of a 10th-floor flat in a new residential development costs an average 88 per cent more than one on the ground floor, and 103 per cent more than a basement flat.

It's a hot little number

Stoves are not just for heating the house, they make fashionable furniture too

For six years, John and Leta Reynolds gazed at a "gruesome" gas fire mounted on a wall in the lounge of their Buckinghamshire home.

When they finally removed it, they spent another four years wondering what to do with the fireplace which lay behind the wallpaper and hardboard where the appliance had hung.

"Other work in the house took priority and I suppose we weren't sure what we'd find if the fireplace was opened up, or what the building costs would be," Mrs Reynolds says. "In the end, we became fed up of looking at a blank wall and decided to go for it."

Three days after the builder, Roy Green, started work he had exposed a 3ft square hole at the base of the chimney — the area into which an open fire had earlier been set and which is known in the trade as a builder's opening — and installed a Vermont Castings Intrepid multi-fuel stove.

What came out of the builder's opening was a small fireback with coals and ash still in the hearth, and a vast amount of brick and rubble infill. Mr Green put in two steel lintels to hold up the chimney breast, an airtight steel plate, called a register plate, across the chimney opening, and a stove pipe to take the smoke from the stove through the plate and into the chimney flue.

The stove itself sits on a solid hearth made of concrete (already in place) with natural slate on top. The sides and back of the fireplace were finished with rustic-look bricks. The total cost of the work was £1,200, including about £700 for the stove.

"I wish we'd opened it up years ago because the stove has been a godsend this winter. It also fits the room perfectly and our two young boys love it," says Mrs Reynolds, who had to seal off all the rooms in the house when the work was being done because of the dust.

The price of stoves — wood burning, multi-fuel (coal and wood), gas or oil — varies from about £250 to £2,000. H.G. Matthews, the suppliers of the Vermont Intrepid and of the handmade fireplace bricks, offers a range of English, American, Belgian and Norwegian stoves in a wide variety of colours. Will Matthews, a director, says: "Stoves are becoming very fashionable. They're like a piece of furniture, an object in the house to be talked about."

Although stoves can be positioned away from the wall, or even in the middle of a room, the favoured location is in an inglenook, a space where an old cooking range used to be, or in a builder's opening.

Peter Healy of the National Fireplace Association says these openings are most commonly found in properties dating from the 1880s to the 1960s, when central heating started to be installed. "People like to have a focal point in a room and stoves are efficient heaters as well. They can also be linked to existing hot water systems," he says.

He advises having the chimney checked for any obstructions and swept before installation. Where the property is more than 30 years old Mr Healy suggests having the flue inside the chimney lined. One way is to have a flexible stainless steel liner dropped in from the top and attached to the stove pipe that comes up through the register plate. Houses built within the last 30 years should have their flues lined already.

Stainless steel flue liners are between five and nine inches in diameter but need to be thicker-skinned for solid-fuel stoves. Allow at least £400 for such a liner inside a typical chimney and slightly less again for installation. Any chimney used for solid fuel ought to be swept twice a year.

Liners help with the draw of the fire, stop smoke and fumes leaking into other rooms if the chimney is not in good condition and prevent any tar seeping through the chimney walls and staining the building.

Mr Matthews says some people make the mistake of buying a stove that is far too big. "They might look beautiful but they will throw out far too much heat for a small room. Even small stoves generate a lot of warmth," he says.

When Mark Trickett and Karen Kankalis were thinking of installing a stove he advised them to make a cardboard replica of the model they wanted. That way they could be sure it looked right in their fireplace and in their 33ft-long lounge. The couple settled for a Belgian stove called an Efel Harmony I (multi-fuel), which cost £870.

Meanwhile, Mrs Reynolds discovered that stoves fired her up more than being a lecturer on wig making. She now has a part-time job in the sales department at H.G. Matthews.

CHRISTIAN DYMOND

DENZIL McNEELANCE

The Reynolds' children love the newly installed stove

FACT FILE

■ National Fireplace Association, 35 Dale End, Birmingham B4 7LN (0121-200 1310). The association has details of stove manufacturers and publishes a year book (£2.50 including p&p) with information and articles about fireplaces. The NFA also has a series of leaflets on lining old chimneys, roomheaters and stoves, and open fires for £2 each or £19 for the set of nine including a binder.

■ H.G. Matthews, Bellingdon Brickworks, Chesham, Bucks HP5 2UR (01494 758212).

FOR SALE

COUNTRY COTTAGES

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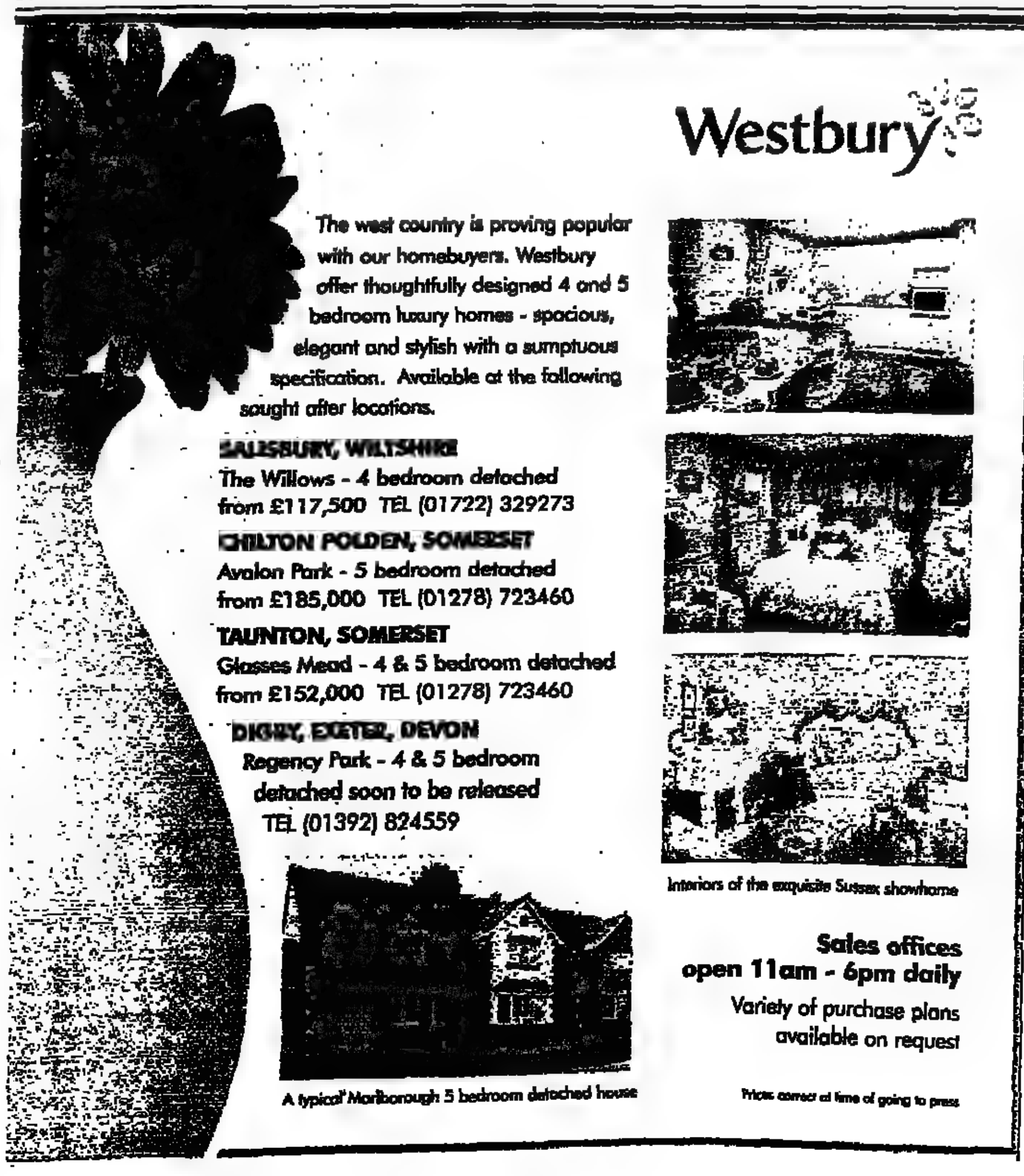

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Auction 22 April
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01666 825725

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A four-storey house in an elegant Nash terrace on the edge of Regent's Park in London . . . well, you can dream

Regency drama from the terraces

DENZIL McNEELANCE

The cream façade of the house, right, is repainted every four years, whether it needs it or not, and window boxes must be restrained

If you are sitting amid the rubble and brick dust of a half-finished, will-this-nightmare-never-end kitchen and granny flat extension, it may be a small comfort to know that even the great John Nash had terrible trouble with his builders.

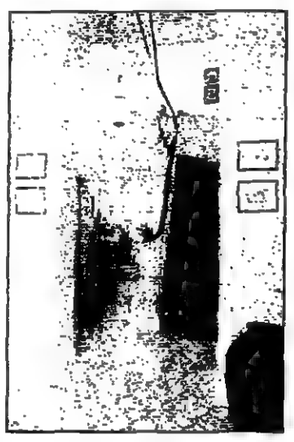
Chester Terrace, one of the last to be built in 1825, completed the elegant sweep of cream Nash terraces that grace three sides of Regent's Park in central London, but it is not as the designer intended. The builder substituted the wings at each end with detached houses; cornices were not considered straight, and the statues on the 52 columns decorating the façade, depicting British worthies, were thought by Nash to be "ludicrous . . . one is a man reading a book, a worthy employment, but if every man who reads a book is to be admitted into the class of British Worthies they would reach round the whole park".

A fine Regency row developed. The statues went, the houses stayed — on condition they were connected to the main terrace by imposing arches. Near the southern arch at the end of the terrace, by an old ivy-covered tree, stands No 4 — for sale for the first time in 30 years, at £1.3 million with a 63-year lease.

Under the protection of the Crown Estates, this four-storey, Grade I listed property has, like all 42 in the terrace, remained a single residence. There are no bedsit conversions or other developers' quick-profit wheezes in this quiet, private road which retains its small, black, wrought-iron street lamps with gold "ER" crests. The Prince Regent could stroll by and see little change, though his every move would be monitored by discreet CCTV cameras, one of the few nods to contemporary street life.

No 4 retains the original ground-floor dining room and high-ceilinged first-floor drawing room facing towards the park, light streaming through three huge half-shuttered sash windows.

After the external splendour, I expected the house to be endowed inside with Brighton Pavilion-like extravagant cornices and mouldings, but they are understated and of simple geometric design, though the L-shaped drawing room has two perfectly-proportioned Corinthian columns guarding the entrance to the study area, mirroring those on the terrace's façade. No radiators intrude on the magnolia-painted Regency walls: central heating comes from ducts set in the wide skirting boards.



The first-floor drawing room faces the park. Below, the tiled hall

The cosy, lived-in kitchen and unpretentious bathrooms need refurbishment to pass muster in these days of push-button technology so beloved of big spenders at the Monopoly money end of the market. Equally *à la mode* is restoring 19th-century details sacrificed to passing fashion over the years, so I would reinstate the missing ceiling light fittings and surrounding roses, strip the paint from the wood-panelled kitchen walls (praying I don't reveal acres of pine, nowadays more nouveau than Nash), and replace the modern grey-beige ceramic floor tiles in the hall and dining room with a more traditional design, perhaps black and white to complement the narrow, white staircase, with its hardwood hand rail, that meanders in a series of elegant curves and swirls to the top of the house.

Can't face the flog up four flights when Rupert leaves his blanket up in the nursery and refuses to feed the ducks and squirrels in Regent's Park without it? Don't despair. Take the small lift, originally built for the butler in what was then the basement staff quarters, to get the breakfast tray to the top bedrooms before the coddled eggs congealed.

On the second floor a large landing leads to the master bedroom, dressing room and small bathroom. You will probably have to learn to live with Nash's idea of how big a bathroom should be: if you have visions of turning it into a fancy glass and marble extravaganza, by shaving a few feet off the landing or bedroom, you will have to get the plans past the Crown Estates style police first.

They will take some convincing. The Crown Estates edicts are ignored at your lease's peril. There is nothing as common as a service charge: fees are paid to the Crown Estate Paving Commission (about £700 a year). Every four years the exterior of the 1,000ft terrace is painted in a specific shade of cream (with its own code number), whether it needs it or not, and residents must comply with stringent maintenance standards.

A resident in nearby Chester Place is said to have been ordered to tone down the horticultural flamboyance of his window boxes. Those lucky enough to live in their own acreage will be spluttering about Englishmen, castles and interfering bureaucracy stamping its heel on personal liberty.

Others might be relieved to know that, in a city where no amount of money can guarantee decent neighbours, such measures ensure that the integrity and serenity of this Georgian masterpiece remain intact, and that any resident who made a mint in scrap metal won't bring his work home.

Buyers are prepared to pay large amounts to be ticked off about their cracked front steps and for once the agent's phrase "much sought after" is spot on. Only one or two of these houses come on the market each year.

There is no garden — a big disadvantage — but the terraces were built with the green expanse of Regent's Park as a very superior back yard. Both would be diminished without the proximity of the other. True, you can't shuffle outside with only a bathrobe and coffee mug well-screened from the *hoi polloi*, but you can enjoy the park's restored Italian garden without the worry of weeding, take a summer evening stroll to the open-air theatre, spend an afternoon with little Cosima in the children's playground or sit on a grass bank overlooking London Zoo and watch an elephant get a pedicure.

Both picnickers in the park and whoever buys 4 Chester Terrace should gaze about them and raise a glass to the Prince Regent, John Nash — and the builders.

CHRISTINE WHEELER

● *Agent: Anthony Breslauer, Goldschmidt & Howland (0171-724 4404).*

HOUSE OF THE WEEK

4 Chester Terrace, Regent's Park, London NW1 ● **Price:** £1.3 million with 63-year Crown Estate lease ● **Shopping:** so central you can walk almost anywhere — south to Oxford Circus and Bond Street or north to Camden Market ● **Entertainment:** London Zoo and Regent's Park open-air theatre on the doorstep; theatreland a short taxi-ride away. Bracing walks in the park or, for a change, Primrose Hill. The park is a magnet, so prepare for masses milling around on hot summer Sundays and Bank Holidays

Hidden temple of the lost world

The restoration of Heligan gardens is complete. Or is it? The owner set off with **Jane Owen** to unearth more dramatic finds

Today *The Times* can reveal the final undiscovered corner of the Lost Gardens of Heligan. The remains of an 18th-century Gothic temple can just be made out through the suffocating embrace of ivy, ferns, moss and brambles on a steep, thickly overgrown hill at the far end of the 57-acre sub-tropical Cornish garden.

In 1991, Tim Smit took on the massive task of restoring these derelict gardens, which reached their zenith in the last century. In so doing, this former archaeologist and rock music producer achieved what no institution could have done in the time with the same resources. Last week he agreed, a little reluctantly, to reveal Heligan's last secret.

We meet in his small wooden office. He is puffing on a thin cigar fielding calls about his scheme to build the world's biggest greenhouse for the millennium, just down the road. A quick change of gear and Mr Smit, whose television series on Heligan began last night, explains the route.

He leads us off through Heligan. Flora's garden, where huge camellias and even a rhododendron are in flower in this first week of March, leads down into the cruciform 1.4 acre vegetable garden and then to the manure-heated pineapple pits.

It is the first time the pits have been fully working and Mr Smit is pretty certain they will ripen pineapples this year, warmed by 100 tons of rotting manure in a lidded trench along the side of the glassed pineapple pit. The know-how for this system died with the Victorian head gardener who understood its secrets. Today, some of the 54 staff employed at Heligan are trying to discover how to get the best out of this organic heating system.

Mr Smit stops. "Do you really want to see the temple hill? It's very overgrown." We reassure him as he caresses a rare *Cupressus duprezIana* once believed to survive only in a certain arid part of the Sahara but now thriving in damp fecundity.

The Lost Gardens of Heligan aren't lost any more. Last year 200,000 people visited them, making them the most popular gardens in the country. Apart from being varied and beautiful and from having some important and unusual plants, overseen by the former director of Wisley gardens, Philip McMillan-Browse, the gardens have the passion that so many historically correct gardens lack.

It takes more than plants to bring a garden alive. Mr Smit has the knack of firing up those around him to put their hearts and souls into what they are doing, and to remind the rest of us about the joy of gardens.

Through Heligan, Mr Smit wants to revive the traditions of co-operation between large gardens and landscapes: for instance, various neighbouring Cornish gardens are propagating old camellia cultivars from Heligan and will return them for selling.

Mr Smit says it is 18 months since he went to the temple and it was so overgrown it might be tricky to find again. I remind him that I am under orders to get the story. Mr Smit suggests that, for all he knows, the temple ruins may have been stolen. We soldier on, looping past the sundial garden with a vast newly planted herbaceous border, past the walled flower garden, the glasshouses stuffed with oranges, passion fruit, bananas and peaches, across the newly planted orchard with rows of medlars, plums and Cornish apples.

We then dip down into the jungle garden where container loads of tree ferns from New Zealand were used to repopulate the sides of the steep valley, and a series of lakes trickle into each other. Vast leaves of gunnera, in season, chusan palms (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) Japanese black pine, gingkos and a *Magnolia x soulangeana* 'Lennei' lend the lush flavour of the tropics.

We come to the end of the gardens, across a millstream and into an overgrown wood of holly and beech and plough through the thick brambles dotted with the odd daffodil and a sea of bluebell leaves, up a steep hill.

We are scratched through our clothes by thorns and a grey drizzle drips constantly through the bare-branch canopy above. At the top of the hill, where Mr Smit reckoned the temple should be, we go in separate directions. No luck.

But then a shout from Mr Smit, and there he is framed by ivy, brambles, ferns, moss and the 18th-century brick remains of the neo-Gothic temple, built as a ruin to be seen in the distance from the grand house, or as a place to aim for after a ride on the Gallops through the gardens below.

I scavenge for stone ornaments or casements that might once have decorated the temple but find only an ancient billy can. There are no pictures of the temple as it was but, going by similar follies and ornaments in the rest of the garden, Mr Smit reckons it would have been built as a ruin without any roof, with a cobble and brick floor.

When he has the funds and the time Mr Smit will restore this and breathe life back into what once may have been a fine trysting place far enough away from the main house to keep lovers' secrets.

He will have to decide whether to keep it as it is or to cut away the woodland and scrub to reveal a "ruined" gothic eyecatcher silhouetted against the horizon.

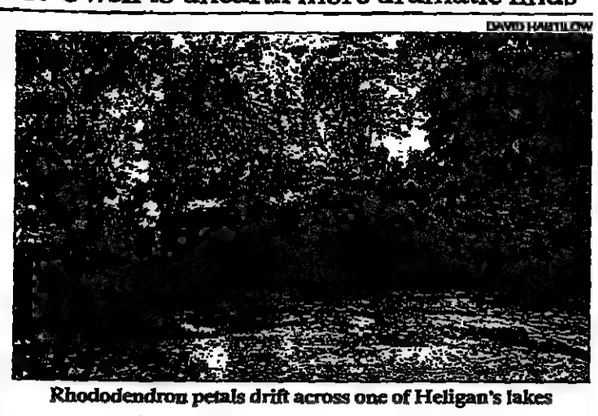
In the meantime another lost section of Heligan has been brought back to life: the 27-acre Lost Valley which opened this week. Nine months ago the valley was an impenetrable mass of sycamore, ash and bramble, and it was assumed to be woodland, as maps suggested. But now a water meadow at the centre of the valley has been planted with wild flowers and the lakes with truckloads of bulrushes. Paths leading down to the ravine have had their drystone walls rebuilt, bridges across the lakes have been constructed and the first wildfowl have arrived.

Mr Smit's whole enterprise is, to use his favourite phrase, "putting something in good heart". For most people this would have been a lifetime's work. But not Mr Smit. Already, on top of the millennium greenhouse, he is firing up about new projects: not simply reviving an obscure Victorian garden boiler system but changing the face of modern horticulture, no less.

And he will probably succeed. Here is a man who has amassed a pile of laurels but I doubt he will ever care to sit on them.

Meet Tim Smit, page 15

DAVID HARTILOW



Rhododendron petals drift across one of Heligan's lakes

DES JENSON

Jane Owen and Tim Smit at the temple in the Lost Gardens of Heligan, which has only recently been discovered among the undergrowth

FACT FILE

■ The second and third programmes in Tim Smit's series, *The Lost Gardens of Heligan*, will be broadcast on March 21 and 28 at 8pm on Channel 4. His book of the same name is published by Victor Gollancz at £20.

■ The Lost Gardens of Heligan, Pentewan, St Austell, Cornwall PL26 6EN (01726 844157) is holding a large anniversary flower show from April 11-13.

GARDEN ANSWERS

STEPHEN ANDERTON
replies to readers' letters

Q Our beautiful old oak tree has fungus growing at ground level on three sides and I fear this will weaken the tree. Should I remove the fungus, and apply a fungicide? — Mrs J.A. Notley, Winchester, Hampshire.

A This sounds like one of the root and butt-rotting fungi, probably the beef steak fungus, *Fistulina hepatica*, and there is no cure. Removing the fungus brackets from the trunk will have no effect; these are merely the fruiting bodies of a fungus which is inside the tree, slowly devouring the roots and heartwood.

There are only two things you can usefully do: first, don't panic; such diseases take many years to run their course before the host dies, and yours seems to be showing no sign even of crown loss yet. Secondly, get a tree surgeon to make sample bore holes to determine the extent of the rot. The greatest risk is collapse of the tree, so it is wise to remove some weight from the crown for safety's sake.

Keep an eye on its health and settle for the fact that its glory days may soon be over. You should consider planting more.

Q A skimmia planted in a north-facing border on clay soil is showing dead branches and yellow leaves. What should I do? — J.A. Anderson, Iver, Buckinghamshire.

A Skimmias are invaluable for their winter berries and glossy foliage, even if they are otherwise unexciting. Male and female plants must be planted to get berries. They prefer a neutral or acid soil of open texture. Is your clay very alkaline? I would replant it in a very well prepared hole, with lots of old compost to open up the soil, and dose it with Miracid, to help it cope with lime and to give it extra trace elements to conquer the yellowing.

Q A bucket-sized terra-cotta pot has been damaged by frost and is discoloured with a powdery surface. How can I improve the look? — Mrs M. Starks, Southampton.

A The real hazard of frost to pots is either bursting altogether, from pressure of frozen soil, or of the surface crumbling as a result of absorbed water being frozen.

A powdery and discoloured surface suggests salts in your water or compost crystallising on the pot. Limey water does this especially badly. A good scrub with soapy water may solve the problem.

In limey areas, the use of glazed (and expensive) Chinese pots solves this problem. On the other hand, in some circumstances, there is the attraction of lichen, and those older clay pots grow lichen less well than modern ones.

● *Readers should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington St, London E1 9XN. We regret that it may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. The Times also regrets that any enclosures cannot be returned.*

What can you plant in a tree-shaded, dry-soil garden? **Barbara Abbs** has some beautiful answers

ANDREW HASSON

In the shaded garden of Anne Daniel's home at Lewes in East Sussex, euphorbias have seeded themselves around the stump of a tree artfully featuring a sundial

Shady characters with charm

Dry shade, found somewhere in almost every garden, daunts the keenest gardener. In out-of-the-way places, such as the bottom of the garden, it can be ignored, used for resting plant pots and compost heaps. When the dry shade is at the front of the house, however, and visible to everyone who passes by, it is a problem that has to be tackled.

There are two types of dry shade: areas beneath large trees and those shaded by walls. The first is the most difficult.

A common solution in spring is to have plants such as snowdrops, winter aconites, *Anemone nemorosa*, and *Erythronium dens-canis* that complete their flowering before the tree's heavy canopy of leaves cuts out the sun and sucks moisture from the soil.

There are some interesting alternatives to this. The boldest is to leave the soil bare, as in a small garden almost entirely shaded by, for example, a large copper beech: attention is focused on the majestic tree and the effect is satisfying. A simple ground cover of glossy, large-leaved ivy, such as *Hedera colchica* 'Dentata' also works well.

Anne Daniel's garden, in a conservation area at Lewes in East Sussex, is exposed to public gaze on two sides. Though permission was given to remove some of the surrounding conifers, the more important large trees, such as beech, yew and sycamore, cannot be removed, making the garden heavily shaded in summer.

Mrs Daniel has been learning about dry shade since the family moved into the house with its neglected garden three years ago. Then, the only outstanding feature was a walnut tree that had been blown down in the 1987 gale and left prone but alive. Now it is surrounded by a variety of euonymus.

Yearly mulches of well-rotted horse manure have ensured the survival of most newly planted shrubs, in spite of the hosepipe bans each summer.

Shrubs and trees that are doing well include *Mahonia japonica*, *Fatsia japonica*, *Viburnum davidii* and *Elaegnus pungens* 'Maculata'. That valuable Victorian standby, the winter-flowering laurustinus *Vibernum tinus* is thriving inches from the trunk of a sycamore, while a pyracantha produces its glowing berries not far from a heavy yew.

Purple *Lunaria annua* (honesty) and euphorbias have already seeded themselves around the stump of one tree, which has been artfully turned into a feature with the addition of a sundial.

Whatever you plant, preparation is important. The garden designer Gertrude Jekyll employed teams of men to dig vast pits in the poor heathland sand at her home and fill them with an assortment of soft garden rubbish, good topsoil, road sweepings and leafmould so that she could grow lilies among the trees. Such excavation is beyond most garden owners but the principles remain.

Dig planting holes as deep as you can and fill the bottom with organic material, compost, well-rotted manure or spent hops. Then, soak the plant well and fill the hole with water and let it drain away before planting, to ensure good rooting. The roots will still need watering for the first summer and, after the tree or shrub is established, you should top-dress regularly with fertiliser.

Even where new plants are competing with tree roots heavy mulching while the soil is damp helps. When the shade is caused by north-facing walls, mulching is even more effective.

Unfortunately, almost all the flowering plants recommended for dry-shade bloom in spring or early summer. But, the good news is that the best of them, such as hellebores and bergenias, are handsome in flower and leaf for much of the year. *Helleborus foetidus* is always perfect, while the colour range of *H. orientalis* cultivars expands yearly, with deeper purples, clearer yellows and richer reds. Bergenias have bold leaves in shades of maroon or green and flower spikes in white, pink and crimson.

Periwinkles, deadnettles, *Euphorbia robbiae* and *Pachysandra terminalis* are real toughies, but beware, they can get out of hand. So, too, can *Lamium galeobdolen* (yellow archangel) and *Vinca major*. I am particularly fond of *Alchemilla mollis*, ferny-leaved *Corydalis lutea* and white *C. ochroleuca*; but they, too, can become weeds.

To grow up shaded walls and fences, there are several old favourites, including the climbing hydrangea *H. petiolaris*; *Chaenomeles speciosa*, the flowering quince with flowers in coral pink, scarlet and white; the new 'Lemon and Lime', which is good against brick; *Lonicera japonica* 'Halliana': the tall canes of *Kerria japonica*; and *Cotoneaster horizontalis*, whose red berries look attractive right through autumn. All these plants should be set 1ft away from the wall or fence.

The golden cut-leaved elder, *Sambucus racemosa* 'Plumosa Aurea', *Philadelphus coronarius* 'Aureus', and *Milium effusum* 'Aureum', a golden millet, are all as bright and flower early in the year. The grassy millet seeds itself well.

There are few annuals that do well in shade but *Asperula orientalis*, a pretty but little known annual with delicate fluffy flowers does, as do busy lizzies or *Impatiens* cultivars.

If you long for bright colour in your dry shade during the summer, a profusion of busy lizzies in scarlet, salmon, white, pink and mauve will provide it for a long period.

Other reliable flowering plants are foxgloves, *Viola labradorica*; *Pseudofumaria* (syn. *Corydalis*) *lutea*, the white *P. ochroleuca*.

Where the climate allows, *Cyclamen hederifolium* flowers in autumn, as does *Liriope muscari*, with its spikes of lilac-coloured beads. None of these have what could be described as blatant flowers, so foliage is important.

The bergenias, hellebores, cyclamen and, in spring, the golden elder and philadelphus, have attractive foliage. Mix these with the polished leaves of box and holly, *Daphne laureola*, *Fatsia japonica* and the variegated aucuba, another favourite of the Victorian shrubbery, for year-round interest. None of them will be too fazed by drought conditions once they are well-established.

Then, plant ferns. Hart's tongue ferns (*Phyllitis scolopendrium* cvs) come in a variety of forms, with ruffled or crimped edges to their long strap-shaped fronds.

Other ferns for shade include *Dryopteris filix-mas*, the common *Polypodium vulgare*, and the hard fern *Blechnum spicant*, which all contrast well with the solid hart's tongues.

WEEKEND TIPS

- Plant evergreens, including hedges, this month. Bare-rooted specimens should be watered well over the next three months. Protect plants from the wind until established.
- Under glass: sow asters, nemesia, petunias, marigolds and sweet peas. Indoors: sow onions, leeks, celery and celeriac.
- Mulch strawberries with well-rotted manure or compost.
- Start watering pots of agapanthus; top-dress with rich compost.

Sculpture garden with impact

OPEN THIS WEEKEND

■ **Roche Court Sculpture Park, East Winterslow, Salisbury, Wiltshire (01980 862244).**

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Roche Court is one of the few gardens in England where contemporary sculpture provides the place's *raison d'être* and the overall effect has a wonderful impact. For a selection of the most distinguished mid-century sculptors, including Henry Moore, Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth (whose work is included at Roche), the marriage of their abstract works and the natural landscape was a leading driving force. Roche Court emphasises this point dramatically with the sculptures displayed in a setting with searching views looking southward along a valley, and benefitting from the old trees, garden walls and yew hedges that provide the more immediate surroundings. All sculptures are for sale.

■ **Broadleigh Gardens, Bishops Hull, Taunton, Somerset (01823 286231).**

Off A38, three miles west of Taunton. Open for viewing only all year, Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm. Free.

Winter and spring bulbs should be integral to any garden, large or small, and most people can benefit from the example of a first-class array of bulbs in flower. Therefore, this is the time of year to visit Christine Skelmersdale's nursery and garden at Broadleigh and see what a range of little treasures you can grow in addition to daffodils and tulips. Whether in grass, a border, a raised bed, pot or windowbox, spring bulbs suit any situation — but it is also worth learning from an expert the kind of precautions to take (to keep off mice for instance). At no time of the year is a small detail of planting more effective than summer when plants are jostling for attention. The anemones, cyclamen, erythroniums, trilliums and quantities of others that you can admire at Broadleigh all illustrate this point. There is a spring catalogue out now (send two first-class stamps to the above address) with many summer and autumn flowering bulbous plants, but go armed with a notebook ready to take tips. Mail order or pre-arranged sales only.

■ **Tresco Abbey, Tresco, Isles of Scilly (01720 422566).**

Via helicopter from Penzance (01736 363871), or from St Mary's by launch. Open daily all year. £5, children free.

Tresco Abbey has as advanced a climate as any garden in Britain and already the array of plants is bursting into leaf and flower. This is a garden for exotics, plants from the Mediterranean, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, such as aloes, acacias and banksias. The terraced levels, dating originally from the 1830s when Augustus Smith began the garden, display a huge array of plants to superb effect. Perhaps most remarkable is the thought that the gales of 1990 devastated the garden. In the ensuing years the clearance and replanting has been as impressive as anywhere, while the regrowth, thanks to the warm maritime climate, cannot be equalled.

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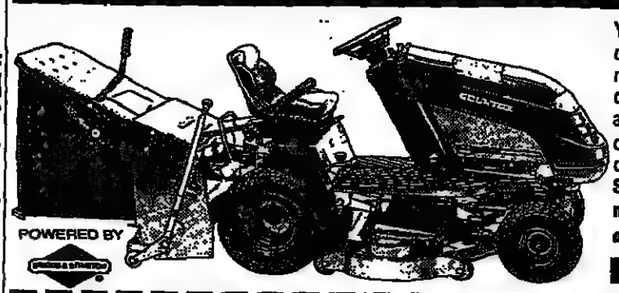

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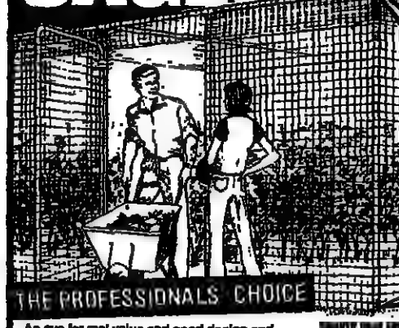

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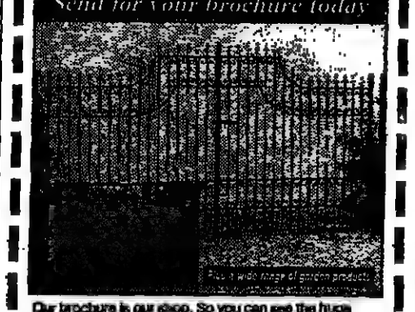
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LADIES

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SLIM, attractive, stylish, 45, designer seeks attractive successful cultured male N/S to share romance, good life style, London. Photo. Box No 3704

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LADIES

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GENTLEMEN

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ROMANTIC, healthy gentleman 47, financially secure, seeks attractive lady 38-45 for long-term relationship. Interests: flying, travel, fitness, skiing, cycling &, of course, food & wine. Good South Coast. Write reply with photo to Box 3832

SHEFFIELD man, late thirties seeks lady for country walks and happy times. Please Reply to Box No 3825

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SUMMER Romance on my beautiful island. Me; young 45, 5'10" tall 14 dark, slim, light brown eyes, well travelled (lived in UK 28yrs) deep, adaptable & fun loving. You: be yourself, mm 40, in London and Home Counties & tel no's plse. Reply Box No 3791

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TALL Chap, 47, professional, own business, fit, outgoing but gentle, hobbies include the arts, and walking, seeks cultured and sophisticated, well spoken, lively, career minded woman of medium build, 5'7"-8, up to 47, to complete the picture. Venue in Scottish border. Photo appreciated. Box 3786

SATURDAY RENDEZVOUS

GENTLEMEN

TALL & dark but hideously probably only to my Mum. I am nice sound of mind, limb & wallet but now short of a woman. I am 48, based in London & Glos, with houses in both places & travel abroad a bit. I wish to meet a tall & intelligent woman & whether I do not say that her other characteristics are immaterial, I wouldn't wish to take the right one by such caprice. I like eccentricity, or at least, individuality. I am fond of music & books & country sports & tennis & wine & cigars but not of driving or cars (although I have a few). At the moment I am working long hours & then collapsing in a heap in the evenings & am in danger, as my children might say, of becoming a bad person. The emotions need a good churn. Write with a photo & I will respond similarly. I would prefer not to have to go slogging off to Hardcopies or Catalhouse. Fleet. Box No 3847

TALL, hunky, virile, attractive, professional male, 40, romantic, fun-loving, sincere. Seeks sexy, attractive, leggy, feminine, lively woman who loves sensual mischief, antiques, champagne, laughter, roses, travel. 35-50 Photo please. London/Surrounds. Box 3755

TALL, slim, male Anglican clergyman 25, catholic churchmanship, gentle, loving, intelligent, [illegible] seeks unattached attractive female with GSOH to enjoy walks, dance, sports or the village pub. Bucks/Herts area. Photo plse to Box 3624

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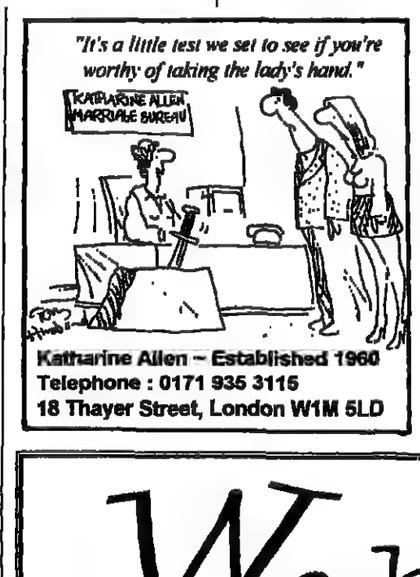
SATURDAY RENDEZVOUS



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'I expect the next generation will be horrified when a government report reveals that pigs eat worms and chickens peck for grubs'

Wanted: self-washing cows for cloning

DOWN TO EARTH

PAUL HEINEY

This is another of those pieces harking back to the good old days, except that the golden age I have in mind is 1991. It was then, if you remember, that ladies running small country bed-and-breakfast establishments, committees running village halls and traders trying to earn a living out of a village shop began to live in fear of a knock on the door. It was yet another inspector armed to the teeth with new powers under the Food Safety Act.

This act was taken up with great zeal by Environmental Health officers across Britain, to the extent that the ice-cream ladies in our local cinema were considered to be "food handlers" and required to take a test to prove their working knowledge of hygiene. In a local public meeting, the big Chief Environmental Officer himself stood up and warned us in awful tones: "From now onwards, I consider water to be a food."

I was involved because at the time I was converting pigs into sausages and, therefore, posed a potential grave threat to life on Earth; just the sort of operator the new laws were designed to control. I was never certain what these new regulations were trying to achieve. I may be wrong, but I have no memory of a generation being lost due directly to B&Bs having only one sink in the kitchen, nor have there been many fatalities from drinking village hall tea — not for hygiene reasons, anyway. But it was the law, and so we "food handlers" had no choice other than to embrace it.

We held a food hygiene course here at the farm, rather than travel miles to a college. I remember my wife laying out a cold lunch on the dining-room table, only to have it moved out of the way by the health officer, who replaced it with his lurid collection of photographs recently taken of condemned lavatories behind an Indian restaurant in Felixstowe. Few *hors-d'oeuvres* have been less successful in stimulating the appetite.

And now, six years later, we learn that it was all a waste of time. While we were worrying ourselves sick at the thought that death was only one bacterium away, in the big, new, approved abattoirs the game was being played to a different set of rules. Despite inspection, regulation and the full force of the most restrictive rules that could be written, we know from an unpublished government report that some abattoirs operate in filthy ways no one could believe possible. So let us now apologise to the small rural abattoirs who were the first to feel the full force of the new puritanism of the Nineties. Some were modest set-ups behind a butcher's shop, the traditional killing place for local livestock. There was not the money to rebuild, and they closed. Did it matter? It did if you were a cow, sheep or pig. While protesters were lining the dockSides objecting to the shipment of live animals across 20 miles of English Channel, farms were loading stock for slaughter and sending them on 100-mile journeys to new factory-style abattoirs, where the profits from production-line killing were large enough to pay the costs to meet new hygiene requirements. Except that, as we now know, pushing up the profits by such things as over-crowded lines in many cases brought standards down again with a bump. We should now realise that the small abattoirs and the butchers were innocents.

I rang my old friend Charlie, whose slaughterhouse closed a few years ago. He now cures hams, "in operating theatre-like conditions". I asked him what happened to cattle that came in to his slaughterhouse for killing, caked in muck and filth of the kind this report outlines. His answer was simple: "They were sent back again. You told the farmers it just wasn't on, and they got the message." That was the only control you needed: the local butcher telling the local farmer to get his act together.

Not many farmers needed telling, because animals arriving for the kill could be seen, and heard. It did not happen behind an industrial façade; it was a village business, and the villagers were their own food inspectors.

Food production is now screened from public gaze and the consumer so divorced from the way crops grow and animals are reared that the basic principles of food hygiene have no relevance to them. The very idea that animals have backsides is shocking to them, and few can gut a chicken or a rabbit. I expect the next generation will be horrified when a Government report exclusively reveals that pigs eat filthy worms, chickens peck for vile grubs, fish feed off sewage outlets.

Perhaps it is no bad thing that this report has reminded us all that potty training among cattle is not of the highest standard. The only hope now is that we are spared more legislation.

Possibly the best answer lies with the genetic manipulators. I suggest they make a heady cocktail of best bovine genes with a string of DNA from a strict, old nanny so that the animals are born knowing they should wipe themselves and wash their hooves with soap and water afterwards. The resulting animal can be cloned.

That will release an army of inspectors who seem unable to spot a mucky backside when they see one, and they can, instead, come knocking on our doors and apologise for frightening the wits out of us back in the good old early Nineties.

Hooked on the wild brown trout

As the new season starts, the battle is on to conserve one of the most admired of British fish. **Brian Clarke** reports

A wild brown trout is one of the most beautiful of fish. It is olive-brown on the back, silver or gold on the flanks, white-bellied and sepia-finned; it is also dappled with red and freckled with black. It is vibrant and volatile, as long prized by anglers for its aerobatic fight as by others for its delicacy and succulence on the plate.

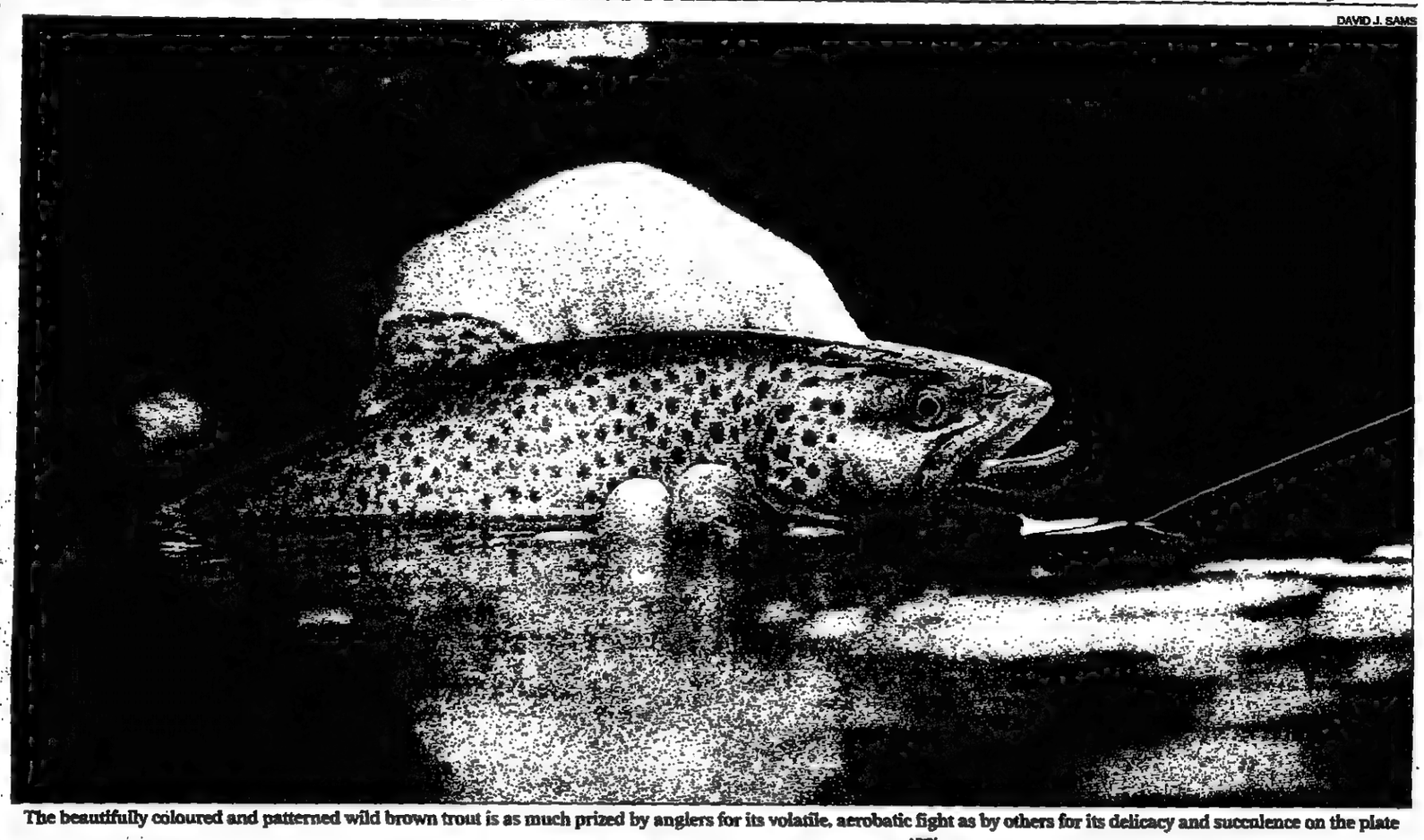
The wild trout is also in retreat. The pressures on it are many-angled and relentless in the water, in the air and on land. It has lived for centuries in the shadow of its great cousin, the salmon, its course — unlike that of the salmon — unsung. Until now.

This month sees the launch of a national group dedicated to fighting for its welfare. The launch has been timed to coincide with the opening of the trout fishing season, which starts in many parts of the country today.

The Wild Trout Society, whose founders include anglers, biologists, fishery managers, riparian owners, conservationists of many persuasions and representatives of environmental bodies, including the Environment Agency (EA), has set itself a formidable range of tasks: Its aim is to put this relatively unknown creature on the national agenda; to identify and fight threats to its wellbeing and habitat, and to organise hands-on restoration work on individual waters holding wild trout. It will also try to persuade anglers — by far the biggest source of potential recruits — to return to the water more of the wild fish they catch.

Wild brown trout were once found pretty well everywhere, except the low reaches of the lowland rivers, and were present in many lakes into which small streams ran. Over the centuries they have been edged remorselessly back by a growing human population with growing needs, carelessly pursued.

Today, the strongholds that remain are mostly in the West Country, Wales, the northern uplands and Scotland, plus a few cosseted headwaters of rivers in the south. Even the great chalk streams of Hampshire, Wiltshire and Berkshire, gin-clear wonders of the countryside that more than 100 years ago saw the birth of dry-fly fishing as a sport, have relatively few wild trout left. It is farm-reared fish that most anglers pursue now.



DAVID J. SAMS

The beautifully coloured and patterned wild brown trout is as much prized by anglers for its volatile, aerobatic fight as by others for its delicacy and succulence on the plate

"All too often the wild trout has been the poor relation on the agenda of those responsible for conservation and management," says Mike Weaver, a West Country writer, angler, conservationist and now chairman of the WTS. "We have to change that."

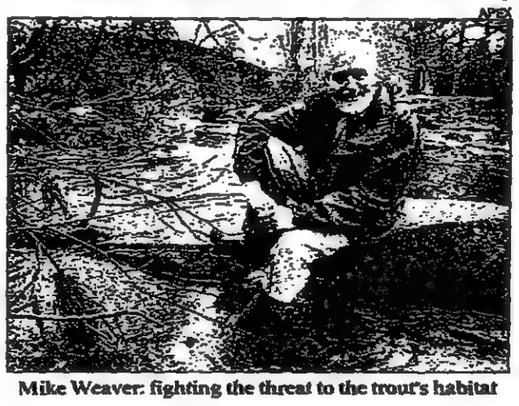
"We also have to be down to earth. We have to identify those things that we cannot change directly, speak with one voice and lobby and educate for all we are worth. Then we have to identify those things we can physically do something about and get on and do them. We are going to be a hands-on body."

The WTS has already drawn up a regional structure and set up a scientific panel. It promises newsletters and information exchange and a yearbook to members. Ron Holloway, keeper of the remarkable Martyr Worthy beat of the Itchen in Hampshire, a chalk stream beat that has not been artifically stocked for 70 years, is to be the society's habitat management adviser.

There is no shortage of issues for the society to tackle — many of the most serious being among the most intractable. Changes in land management are high on the list, not least because of their impact on the fish's ability to spawn.

Even the wild trout's upland strongholds have not escaped land management problems. Pine forests have been planted right to the edges of the tiny rivulets where hill trout spawn. One effect has been to deprive the water of light and the hatched young of the cover and insect food they need.

Another effect, subtle but deadly, is that concentrations of conifers, with their myriad tiny leaves, filter acids from the rain and channel it into the water table, through the roots, in a concentrated form. As a result, many hill streams have been made barren.



APEX

Mike Weaver: fighting the threat to the trout's habitat

In the lowlands, dredging to improve land drainage has grubbed out the gravel shallows in which trout lay their eggs. Ploughing and cattle grazing to the water's edge have caused banks to topple, soil to be washed downstream and spawning beds to become filtered, suffocating any eggs laid in them.

Abstraction has lowered water tables, causing some wild trout sanctuaries to dry up completely and others to flow more slowly, changing their characters. Abstraction combined with reduced rainfall has meant less dilution of insecticides and fertilisers sprayed on to farmland, and of toxic cocktails ending up in the water. Abstraction plus fertilisers plus hot summers has led to huge growths of algae that have choked water courses from bed to surface and bank to bank.

And all of this without a mention of pollution — industrial pollution — as most people understand it. The list goes on and on.

While it is lobbying and pushing for progress on these longer-term issues, the WTS is planning projects to improve individual waters where it feels short-term benefits can accrue.

The first will be in Dartmoor National Park. Mr Weaver, who is a government-appointed member of the Park Authority, has already won the support of his colleagues, and of the Duchy of Cornwall, the West Country Rivers' Trust and the EA to identify a reach of water holding wild trout that are already showing the first signs of population decline or condition loss. The aim is to identify any local causes of decline — even things as basic as damage to spawning sites downstream of picnic spots — and to try to find remedies while public access continues.

"The challenge of working in a public space is also the appeal," Mr Weaver says. "The park gets three million visitors a year. We cannot be elitist. We have to work in the real world."

Other projects will follow and, as lessons are learnt, they will be passed on.

The Dartmoor project will have a flying start. Among those who have offered help is the team of biologists from Game Conservancy that has for years been studying the River Piddle, a tributary of the Frome, in Dorset. Wild trout have been caught, anaesthetised, tagged and then released, so that their subsequent growth and movements can be monitored.

The Piddle's banks have been sculpted, flows changed and channelled, spawning beds have been cleaned and cattle fenced away from the water. The results, in populations and growth rates, have been remarkable.

'It has lived in the shadow of its great cousin the salmon – until now'

Such projects can only be the beginning. There are no quick solutions that will help the wild brown trout at large, because the degradation of its habitat is so widespread. And yet the National Rivers Authority, now absorbed into the EA, made progress on some wider issues. Projects like those on the Piddle, the Itchen and, hopefully, Dartmoor will tell us something about the short-term. The WTS will add a dedicated new voice. It may be that the current is beginning to change.

Many, and not only those anglers casting their first flies today, will hope so. The wild brown trout has been likened to the miner's canary: a barometer of the health of the place in which it exists. Trout rivers and streams are only as healthy as the environment which surrounds them, the landscapes where we ourselves live.

● *To become a member of the WTS (£10), write to the Wild Trout Society, PO Box 2903, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 7XD.*

Grebes' concerto for lovers

FEATHER REPORT

OVER LAKES and rivers, a shrill, whinnying cry can be heard these March mornings. It sings out from somewhere in the reeds — a ripple of excitement, you might say, running not through a crowd but through a single voice. It comes from a bird that is more often heard than seen: a little grebe.

These diminutive diving birds lurk for much of their life in the reedbeds. In winter, they often go down to the sea, but most of them are back again now and preparing for the spring.

They moulted last month, and their drab, greyish-brown winter plumage has given way to something much smarter. Their backs are dark brown, and their cheeks and throats are a bright chestnut-orange.

When they come out on to open water and allow a good view of themselves, little grebes are quite distinctive. No water bird has a more unmistakable stern. At its rear end, the little grebe certainly looks very plump, with its feathers often puffed up, and also very square. Seen from the side, it presents a straight line to the world behind it.

Little grebes dive constantly, looking for fish and molluscs, and can move a long way under water before they surface again. Sometimes they just lift their head above the water, looking round before they come up. They can be over-ambitious, and occasionally choke themselves on a large fish such as a miller's thumb.

Their trilling call plays a large part in their lives. The male and female sing duets to each other when they are pairing and mating. They face each other on the water, with their necks stretched up stiffly, and trill away. They also give presents of waterweed to their mates and, as nesting time gets nearer, they make platforms of reeds on which to climb up and perform their rituals.

In due course, one of these platforms is built up higher to become their nest, and here, in late April or May, the female will lay four or five white eggs.

PETER BROWN

Little grebes will spend much of their lives lurking in the reedbeds

Like other species of grebe, if she leaves the nest she will cover the eggs with wet weed and, long before they have hatched, these will have become stained and blotchy.

Most of the other grebe species have elaborate ornaments of ear-tufts or ruffs on their heads and necks. Great crested grebes are now showing these off dramatically as the courting pairs face each other and vigorously shake their heads. On the other hand, the other grebes are generally silent birds.

Why are little grebes noisy and relatively plain, while their cousins are quiet but exotically feathered? It is probably because of their different habitats. Great crested grebes spend most of their time out on the open water, where their ornaments can be displayed to full effect when they are wooing or fighting.

Little grebes have adapted themselves to a largely hidden life among the reeds, where sound counts for much more than sight. It is an example of the usual economy we find in nature, where evolution has tailored every detail of life to what works best.

DERWENT MAY

● **What's about:** *Birders — listen out for chiff-chaffs newly arrived from their winter quarters further south. Twitchers: white-billed diver, Portland Bill, Dorset; little bustard, Dartmoor, Devon; crested lark, Overstrand, Norfolk. Details from Birdline on 1891 700222. Calls cost 40p a minute cheap, 50p at all other times.*

ON THE SPOT: WINDSOR GREAT PARK

Rural recommendations

The place: Cow Pond, Windsor Great Park, Berkshire.
The view: Across the pond looking east: sandy, heather-covered shore, great beech trees, rhododendrons.
The appeal: A quiet, hidden pond, with water lilies on which moorhens walk, and old alder trees hanging over it. I saw my first mandarin duck on it when I was a schoolboy.
Aficionados: Walkers, bird-watchers, people drifting away from watching the polo on Smith's Lawn.
Historical interest: Surrounded by early 19th-century parkland, with magnificent sweet chestnut trees. Nearby is the grove of oaks planted by representatives of the British Empire and Commonwealth to celebrate the Coronation of George VI in 1937, with a different species from nearly every country. After 60 years, many have died, but some are tall and noble — like the colonies and dominions they came from.
Time of year/time of day to visit: All seasons are charming here, but in some autumns you can find a rich harvest of beechnuts on the ground. I have a tree in London grown from a beechnut picked up here. The pond is attractive in sunlight and shadow.
How to get there: Turn off the A30 for Englefield Green and drive through the village to the Bishopsgate Lodge entrance to Windsor Great Park. Turn left at the lodge and walk along the path through the rhododendron bushes.
OS reference: 977715.
Also nearby: Views to Windsor Castle and Royal Lodge, with a chance of seeing members of the Royal Family. The Fox and Hounds pub by Bishopsgate Lodge has good food.

D.M.

● *Illustration: Jane Spencer.*

هكذا من الاصل

Green and pleasant land? Rubbish

Townsfolk are using the countryside as a convenient dumping ground for an astonishing range of unwanted items

Take a trip into the countryside this weekend and you will probably find evidence of one of Britain's most secretive inhabitants, the flytipper.

A common breed, and definitely not worth protecting, flytippers are people who dump rubbish illegally. Often town and city dwellers, they choose quiet spots in which to offload their junk. And where better than the still of the countryside?

The bucolic scene on the downs near Brighton was recently spoiled by a heap of used tyres. In Yorkshire 1,400 drums of toxic waste were left next to a footpath near Consett, while a woodland near Holsworthy in Devon was contaminated by raw sewage emptied from a tanker lorry.

In Cornwall, a resident of St Just drove to nearby open countryside and dumped car parts, including a bonnet and doors. He was unable to tell bemused magistrates why he did not prefer to collect the scrap value at a proper site and they fined him £500. He was spotted by a passerby who rang the Environment Agency's flytipping hotline and the case was pursued, but other householders escape punishment. These town-dwellers seem to be happy to leave their mark while taking the family out into the country for a drive. Once in the rolling fields, they open the boot and tip dustbin bags, furniture, toys, broken electrical goods and rotting food — there, among the green and pleasant, is the green and not so pleasant, damp and mouldering.

It seems no amount of refuse collection services, waste recycling centres or landfill sites can persuade the flytipper to be rid of their waste legally, even though they face fines and imprisonment. The Environment Agency, set up in April last year and working in conjunction with local authorities, is tackling the problem but it seems some people are still happy to rubbish the system.

Kevan Davies is a Waste Regulation Officer for the Agency's South West region in Devon, one of Britain's most beautiful counties but blighted by flytippers. "Those who dump come from all backgrounds, some commercial, many simply householders," he says. "Whether it's a one-man builder, a skip company or someone with a lot of black dustbin bags, their aim seems to be to cut corners. It's easier to fling the rubbish into a wood than take it to a dump."

Waste officers, armed with syringe-proof gloves, search through rubbish for clues as to the perpetrators, and while townies are frequently to blame, according to officers based near urban conurbations, rural dwellers dump rubbish too.

> Municipal dumps are open when people are at work and they are fussy about what they take

Kevan Davies says: "It is very sad but the attitude seems to be, 'I'll just fling it in the wood and someone else can clear it up'."

The majority of Britain's household waste can be got rid of free of charge, through the refuse collection service — although dustmen in one Devon town may have been understandably reluctant about taking away a plastic bag full of rotting deer carcass. The agency believes that the bag, discovered in woodland, was probably intended for refuse collection, being placed in a council-marked bag, but sometimes dustmen object to picking up certain types of rubbish. On the other hand, toxic and commercial waste does cost money to dump, the charge dependent on the quantity and toxicity.

Bridget Norris, who works at the Agency's public relations office in Exeter, says there are two types of people to blame for flytipping — "those calculating people who want to escape paying to dump, and those who claim they are too busy to take their waste to a proper site. Either way they have no respect for the countryside."

Undercover surveillance is one way of beating flytippers. Kevan Davies and a colleague spent most of one recent Sunday night sitting on the quayside at Bideford after reports of dead fish being dumped in the harbour. They eventually left and missed an estimated two van loads of waste — mainly small spur dogs, members of the shark family — go into the water. An eyewitness was able to pass on details and a fish processing company is being questioned by the Agency.

Dead fish smell — but other materials are more dangerous. Waste diesel, oil and car batteries are a threat to health and regularly dumped in the countryside, leaking into the soil and waterways.

Yet in the busy modern age disposing of rubbish can be time-consuming. Conscientious people will make time to recycle but gone are the days when civic dumps were left open day and night and the public could simply turn up and sling a mixture of rubbish in a heap. In summer, when people are often doing jobs at home late into the evening, sites may close at 7pm or earlier. On Sundays, some close at lunchtime.

These civic amenity sites, run by contractors, set their own regulations and can also be fussy about what they will accept. Tons of asbestos roof sheets sit on old sheds across the country, but try getting rid of one and you may have difficulty. Because opening hours at sites can be inconvenient, junk often turns up in nearby woodland, indicating that people conscientiously set out to dispose of their rubbish properly, then spoil their good intentions when they cannot gain access and slide it into the nearby undergrowth.

It took more than a roll of Andrex to clear up the sewage dumped in Devon but the Forestry Commission, as a responsible landowner, did its best.

The public can do their bit too, by phoning the flytippers hotline with vehicle details if they notice anything suspicious.

CARL EVANS

● *Environment Agency, flytipping hotline. Call free on 0800 807060*

STILL PICTURES

Flytippers face fines and imprisonment but are still reluctant to dispose of their waste legally, in spite of refuse collection services, recycling centres and landfill sites

Home is where the art is

Who needs to go out for culture? Homes are opening up as art galleries, cinemas and theatres

Home may be where the hearth is: a place of privacy and escape. But for some it is becoming less of a retreat and more of a forum: a place which the jargonists might have already termed a *multi-use environment*. Work, social life, entertainment, exercise, worship: it all happens in the downshifted domestic interior, as if to prove the American wit's couplet: "Even home has more variety/Than I find in café society".

A few years ago there was the much-vaunted trend for cocooning, which basically meant staying in because you were too depressed, poor or mired in negative equity to go out. Now we have the scenario of the home being thrown open to the public stage, salon, art gallery, studio, amusement arcade — virtually anything one chooses really, as long as it is fun or edifying.

It may even be financially rewarding, though letting strangers into one's home does require nerve. Johnny Morris, an artist and designer who lives in east London, decided to open his home under the title Gallery Ezra to sell his and his friends' prints. He put a sign outside, opened the door and siphoned off the Sunday morning pedestrian traffic that seethes along Columbia Road flower market on his doorstep.

Allowing the public into his home was not without its fraught aspects. "It was quite exhausting," he recalls. "I was working hard, going out on Saturday night and then having to get up at 8am to do the gallery. And having people walking round the flat with shopping bags was not the most conducive way to start a Sunday."

But everyone was very well behaved, apart from a drunken gatecrasher at his opening party, and the occasionally wayward local kids caused no trouble. "In fact," Mr Morris says, "people were incredibly polite and quite nervous." His flatmate was less welcoming. "He ate his breakfast sullenly with people walking around him, and thought there should be a rent reduction. I said there should be an increase because he had become famous." The venture was also good for neighbourly relations, and was such a financial success that Mr Morris will throw open Gallery Ezra again in spring.

A more full-time concern takes place a mile or so away in the atmospheric quarter of Spitalfields, east London, where Phoebe Tate and Gareth Harris recently opened a gallery in their Georgian house. Made to Measure, named after the previous tailor tenants, consists of a small room at the front of the house, which is to be dedicated exhibition space.

"We don't want a gallery as such," says Ms Tate, who used to work as an art consultant for Saatchi and Saatchi in Milan. "We are doing it as part of the house, and the fact that it is a domestic space is important." Their plan is "to make art more domestic".

"Nowadays much art is monumentally-sized and made for museums, but throughout history it has been made for homes," she says.

The building itself is part of the attraction, and a lot of their visitors are fascinated by the house. They have had to put up "private" signs telling visitors where they cannot go. But while they stress that entrance is by appointment only, passers-by may come in if it is convenient.

Their exhibition room will also be used for talks: Mr Harris, a silversmith and goldsmith, is also a guide for the Victoria and Albert Museum, and they plan to deliver historic accounts of the area over a glass of some appropriately anachronistic beverage such as port.

Bringing culture into the home has tended to favour visual art, if only that paintings and sculptures are relatively manageable in the domestic context. But the actress Christie Jennings and designer Jane Heather have put on plays in their shared loft in Bermondsey, south London, with food and drink.

"It started because we wanted to put on more comic writing for women," Ms Jennings says. "Instead of complaining, we said 'why don't we do something?' So we came up with entertainment at home."

Blessed with a large living room, they create a stage at one end and hire chairs from a banqueting service for an invited audience of around 100 people. A bouncer-sized friend is installed at the door. Ms Jennings's bedroom doubles up as the dressing room, and they make sure that visitors have time to mingle during the intervals. This final aspect is crucial, for they have an ambitious guest list and invite all kinds of people.

"We thought we'd invite people of influence, as it is a great way of getting noticed," Ms Jennings says. "If we'd hired a pub theatre, it would have cost thousands. This way you get more response in one night than in a six-week run in an upstairs room."

They are working on a couple of new productions, including *The Fireraisers*, by the German playwright Max Fritsch, and vignettes from Shakespeare, and this time they are thinking of charging to offset some of the £600 that each show costs. But there is never much post-production trauma in the flat, contrary to the destruction a house party can wreak. All that is needed, Ms Heather says, is a certain amount of clearing up. "Luckily the landlord is sympathetic and even said he'd lower the rent," she adds. There may be hidden benefits to the open house beyond the joys of cultural exchange.

The sharing of a fantasy world may also be a part of the open-house tendency. Norman and Valerie Illingworth of Wooton, Bedfordshire, have a cinema in their garage, where invited guests can sit in genuine velvet cinema seats and watch a motorised curtain unfurl onto a programme of archive film material: cartoons, newsreels, adverts. Mr Illingworth, 74, dresses in evening dress; Mrs Illingworth, 56, acts as an usherette, and during the screenings ice-cream and popcorn are served. After the show, guests — who range from friends to groups from old people's homes — often repair across the garden path to have a coffee in the house. No money changes hands.

"We both used to work in the cinema and, like many others, we retained a permanent interest," Mr Illingworth says. "Usually we know someone in the audience, and they bring a bottle of wine and we have a party night. It's a fun thing."

The creation of the atmosphere is the main point, with many authentic effects including a 35mm projector — a higher professional standard than most home cinemas — housed in the former coal cellar.

The garage is known as the Picturedome, and has acquired a certain amount of local fame, despite the fact that screenings are not that frequent. The Illingworths, meanwhile, are simply pleased to be able to share their enthusiasm in the comfort of their own garage.

OLIVER BENNETT

DES JENSON

Gareth Harris shows a visitor sculptures by Paola Pezzi and Paola Brusati at his Georgian home in Spitalfields, east London

A VET WRITES

Q I have a pond — there are no fish in it but a lot of snails and water boatmen. There are masses of frogspawn every spring but few tadpoles reach maturity. I'm sure something is eating them. Can I do anything to stop this or could I raise spawn away from the pond?

A Herons, seagulls and even blackbirds will snatch tadpoles basking in the shallows. And leeches could be a hazard.

Covering the pond with small-mesh wire netting will keep airborne enemies away. Hatching spawn in a bowl or tub of water is a practical proposition. They would need feeding on liver or meat and you should provide a gangway (a small plank of wood) so the semi-frogs can leave the water and breathe air when they are advanced enough.

Q The younger of my two cats has started to bring earthworms indoors as presents for me. What can I do to wean him from this habit?

A This is his way of showing he loves you. A telling off won't work because he has achieved his purpose by attracting your attention. A wetting from a water pistol every time he approaches with his gift would persuade him that you are an ungrateful owner and these presents are a waste of his time and effort.

J.A.

● *Write to: The Times Vet, Weekend,* The Times, *1 Pennington St, London E1 9XN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.*

Owners are often alarmed by the behaviour of their pets — but there are simple solutions

Worried about Rover

BARUMONT

Pet owners worry. Pets don't. Animals can be frightened, uncomfortable, bored or lonely but they don't worry about the future, their personal appearance or what the neighbours think.

People often worry about normal animal behaviour. Top of the worry list — judging by the volume of calls to pet advice phone lines — is coprophagia, when dogs eat their own, or another dog's, faeces. Dreadful by our standards, but not from where the dog is sniffing. When a bitch keeps her puppies and nest clean by eating their faeces she is a marvellous mother.

But, there are other reasons for coprophagia. Pups in kennels mimic the older animals. Bored dogs may eat faeces because there is nothing else to do. And some dogs are trained to behave in this way — inadvertently. Overzealous toilet training, punishing the puppy when a mishap occurs indoors, can teach him to hide the evidence of his crime by eating it.

Remove temptation by clearing up after him. Talk to your vet as there are medicines which will make their motions offensive to them. And teach your dog that the head of his pack (that is you) is delighted when dog faeces are ignored. Put him on a lead and walk him past one of his recent evacuations. Tell him to ignore it and, when he does, reward him with extravagant praise and his favourite titbit. A few dozen repeats and he will get the message.

Coprophagia is a near-essential part of rabbit nutrition, however. They have hard and soft droppings. The latter are eaten and provide essential vitamin B.

Next on the worry list is travelling. Some owners are convinced their pet will suffer post-traumatic stress disorder unless he has a tranquilliser before any car journey. Tranquillisers cannot be switched off at journeys end. Dogs arriving in a strange place need to be in total command of their faculties. A half-doped dog can get lost or, as I have witnessed, sit in the middle of an unfamiliar road waiting to be run over.

Most dogs like cars. Finty, my Staffordshire bull terrier, jumps in the car whenever the door is left open. In hot weather we have to take care she is not shut in and cooked. Some dogs are car sick, others get overexcited and become dangerous passengers. Most dogs can be converted into acceptable travellers. A car sick dog needs experience so work out how far he can travel without being sick and take him that distance every day for a week. Then go a bit further and so on. In three months he will travel indefinitely without any ill effects. The hyper-excited dog may have been trained to behave in this lunatic fashion. Car journeys take him to the park for an exciting runaround. If he's walked to the park and then collected, journeys will end on a low note — back home and nothing to get excited about.

Sex is another worry which embarrasses many owners. Dogs perform on cushions, trouser legs and each other — and not only the males. One bitch mounting another during an elegant tea party is guaranteed to bring the conversation to a halt. The dog has to be taught that sexual misbehaviour is not popular. Dismissing the offender to his bed is the best way of pointing out the error of his ways.

Small breeds are the worst offenders. They are much more highly sexed than giant breeds who often need a book of instructions to tell them what to do — even when the lady's willing, and a stud fee has been paid.

Castration appears the obvious solution and there is much to commend it. It is not natural or reasonable to keep a fit and healthy male animal in monastic seclusion.

How many times have you seen a dog or cat with an unkempt coat because their owner maintains "they don't like being combed"? They worry about the tangled, knotted mess, but resent anyone suggesting they are neglecting their pet. Very few parents leave a child's hair uncombed because the child doesn't like it. Pets should be dealt with in the same way — told to sit still and endure it. If the coat is beyond owner-aid, a grooming parlour will sort things out and a filthy-tempered cat can be combed under anaesthetic if necessary.

Have a grooming session every day. Cats and small dogs behave best if they are placed on a table so there is no grip for struggling claws. New pet owners should start grooming a puppy, kitten or long-haired rabbit from day one so they will grow up accepting grooming as an enjoyable part of life.

The most ridiculous worry is about what the vet will say. "I didn't take him because he might say it is cancer/should be put to sleep/operated on" are some of the inexcusable reasons for neglecting ailing pets. Your vet advises you, and if you agree, treats the animal. The advice might not be what you hoped to hear but that doesn't make it wrong.

Seeing your vet won't alter anything. Incurable conditions will still be incurable. But it will relieve things that can be cured and put to rest worries that are without foundation.

JAMES ALLCOCK

ADOPT ME

Non is 18 months old

SISTERS Nell and Non are 18-month-old pedigree sheep dogs who were brought to the centre before Christmas. They will need special care and handling because they are both deaf. Contact the National Canine Defence League Rescue Centre, Tondu Road, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan CF31 4LH (01656 652771).

Nell needs special care

'She was trapped between the social services and the hospital authorities, with no one quite knowing what the other side was up to'

Welcome home at last, auntie

LIFE AND SOUL

GINNY DOUGARY

This weekend, my formidable 85-year-old aunt is in her own home in Edinburgh for the first time in four months: a cork-popping event for our family, and one I did not think we would be celebrating. My aunt is very much my late father's sister — a fighter, fiercely independent, and no great tolerator of fools, although rather less likely to mutter an expletive under her breath when encountering them, since she is a Presbyterian and a devout churchgoer.

It has been a long and frustrating haul since she went into hospital after a fall last November, only for a week or so, we all thought. But it turned out to be a protracted time of tests and assessments and discussion groups, of ward changes and changes of new personnel, of forlorn carol singing, the gifts of Christmas poinsettias on her bed-tray giving way to the bunches of hopeful, early daffodils.

Of all the ways in which age could have chosen to diminish her, this seemed to be the cruellest. Her scholarship has been the foundation of her life. Books and learning, travel and the Church have been her family and companionship. She has defined herself by her doctorate in literature and her long years as a teacher. There have been no ball gowns and pretty compliments and hand-kissing for her. Nor, do I think, would she have cared for any of that malarkey. She would say, quite rightly, that a husband and children are not the only criteria by which to judge the fulfilment of a woman or the happiness of a life.

While her brothers left Scotland and married and had children of their own, she was the dutiful one who stayed at home looking after their mother and their mother's sister. Her womanly bloom faded in a life of devotion and caring. I can still vaguely remember her antique charges: two monumental women in black clothes, like corpulent, smiling crows, stuffed into their armchairs by the fire, talking about God's will and "home baking".

It seems to me a terrible thing — and if it is God's will, he is a hard, Presbyterian God indeed — that because of distance and circumstance, when my aunt might expect her own family to care for her, we have been able to do so little. But that is not the only sadness.

Alzheimer's, dementia, forgetfulness, confusion, memory lapse — my aunt and I have discussed none of the above. For the one thing she could not bear would be to lose her marbles. Saintly she may be compared to most of us, but she does have this small sin of pride. She wears her intelligence as a badge of honour.

Mercifully, my aunt does not appear to have been in the "hard, dark place" that Iris Murdoch described heart-wrenchingly, shortly before it was confirmed that she had Alzheimer's. My aunt's sense of impotence has not been to do with the diminution of her mental powers, but with her inability to persuade her doctors she is fit to go home. They want her to go into *a* home, rather than back to her own.

The weekend before Christmas, we took the train up to Edinburgh — the two boys, my husband and I. The ward smelt of urine and cabbage. The patients, eyes closed or gazing into nothingness, seemed to be in a limbo-land between sleep and death. We saw my aunt before she saw us — a little old lady, shrunken into herself, sitting in a chair next to her bed.

She told us the same stories two or three times in exactly the same way — each detail intact, each nuance and inflection faithfully preserved — and stroked the boys' hands. "And you, of course, are the musical one," she said to the unmusical one. I corrected her, very gently — it seemed more insulting not to — but I wish I had not. "Oh, that is very wrong of me," she said, a look of pain on her face. "I should know that."

A woman placed a packet of biscuits on my aunt's bed, shuffled down the ward in her old slippers and returned to retrieve the packet. This she repeated three or four times, looking slightly puzzled as each circuit was completed. My aunt no longer noticed such things, but I felt angry that she was surrounded by people whose wits had deserted them. When we left the hospital, my nine-year-old son said, "Why don't they do to old people what they do to dogs?"

As the weeks turned into months and my aunt could not find out what they intended to do with her, I could sometimes hear a new note of fear or muffled panic in her voice on the telephone. She was trapped between the social services and the hospital authorities, with no one quite knowing what the other side was up to.

Now at last her flat, the one she once shared with her mother and her mother's sister, has been made into an impregnable fortress of safe fires and toasters and kettles against her old age and — how shall we put it? — occasional absent-mindedness. Welcome home.

Dad's weekend dilemma

How far one parent should indulge the children is a tricky balancing act, as **Adrian Mourby** can testify

PETER NICHOLLS

Simon Redman with Catherine, left and Siobhan, believes in giving his wife time off at weekends. "But you have to be careful not to become Daddy Bountiful"

First thing tomorrow morning I'll be up at the folk museum, bright and early, swelling the ranks of the middle-aged men, and bemusing the curators once again. It never ceases to amaze the staff at St Fagan's that they do their best trade of the week on Sunday mornings. But it doesn't surprise me one bit. Here, after all, is a small café and a playground, both of which open up long before anything else in Cardiff.

Of course no one is much interested in the reconstructed 17th-century tannery nearby, nor the authentic working corn mill, but the climbing frames are positively alive with wriggling children and there, on the benches behind them, sit rows of very tired-looking men in their late thirties and early forties.

These are the weekend fathers, men who were up all night trying to scrape their children off the ceiling after the cumulative effects of a trip to the cinema, late-night dining at McDonald's, bathtime that turned into Billy Smart's Circus and five games of tickle monster up and down the stairs. It about 11pm last night the weekend father probably sat down with a bowl of instant pasta and fell asleep in front of the TV, only to be woken at half past six this morning by several children who wanted to know when the fun was starting up again.

A lot of weekend dads are divorced men who only get one or two days a week to maintain contact with their children, but not all by any means. My wife and I have an arrangement whereby every six weeks or so she goes to visit friends to have time off from demanding children and an equally demanding husband.

On the first of these solo stints I made the acquaintance of old hands like Moelwyn Owen, whose wife goes sailing one weekend in three, and Simon Redman, whose working week involved long hours at the office, frequent trips away, and a very tired wife come Friday evening. Simon has always been a firm believer in giving "Her Indoors" some well-earned rest at the weekend and, over the years, he has explored all the regular haunts in his home town of Farnham. "Early on Saturday morning our local swimming pool is full of dads with their children," he says. "I've yet to see a woman near the learner's pool before midday."

> Bathtime always turns into Billy Smart's Circus

Weekend fathers are invariably people who *do* things with their children. A woman left to amuse her children will be capable of staying in the house with them for a little while, even sitting down for a few hours, but men usually have to get out and be active. Simon and his two daughters have their routine which includes McDonald's, the pool, the swings and his personal all-time favourite: the Bat and Ball, not a game at all but Farnham's child-friendly pub which not only offers food that children will eat but a wonderful climbing frame and eight real ales.

Simon values the hours that he has with his daughters, Siobhan, 11, and Catherine, seven, but he recognises that a weekend father has to be careful. "I've spent a lot of time negotiating with the Transport & General Workers Union but they're a pushover compared with two girls who reckon they can get concessions out of dad.

"The problem is that it's very easy to walk in on Friday evening and not recognise what Mum has managed to hold out against all week. You can see them thinking 'Oh, a new potential benefactor, let's see what we can get out of him'. You've got to check back all the time before saying yes and really resist the temptation just to be Daddy Bountiful." Simon has been a weekend primary carer ever since his daughters were tiny and he takes most things that fatherhood can throw at him in his stride. The only prospect that can make his heart sink is a birthday party. "That means dropping one child off with a present, filling in time with the other one, and then back to pick up the first daughter."

Other weekend fathers are not as easy-going as Simon. Moelwyn is one of those I've often seen at the folk museum. When he has his boys to himself the rules about what the four of them do together are much stricter. "It has to be something that I want to do too. No point being an entertainments officer. I also try to avoid amusement arcades and fast food."

Simon is much more relaxed about indulging his daughters but even he has been known to plan the odd Saturday afternoon around a can of lager in front of the TV when there's an international match on. This is when a canny weekend father will have built up his network of similarly placed dads. "I'll have someone else's children to play while he watches the grand prix and another time he'll help me with my two when there's a match on at Twickenham," Simon says.

Both Simon and Moelwyn nevertheless try to make the most of this time with their children. Simon says: "If, like most London dads, you don't get home until seven or seven thirty you're not only missing out on them growing up, you're also failing to meet their friends. That's where the weekends are important because you get a much better impression of the kind of world your children are living in when you see who they spend their time with."

Moelwyn believes that his sons talk to him a lot more when their mother isn't around. "When you're the only parent on call you get to hear all their little fears and anxieties, whereas when their mother is at home they'll talk to her about some things and me about others."

Both men are seasoned weekend carers and in their different ways they pace themselves. The ones to watch out for are the new boys on the block, men who haven't gone solo with their children before, or the fathers who are feeling guilty about the events that have left them in sole charge of their offspring.

"It's the divorced ones I feel sorry for," Simon says. "You can see them trying so hard and what they're saying all the time is 'Don't you have a better time with me?' "

Moelwyn is more critical. "These men are trying to assuage their guilt and buy their children's affection."

Certainly, in my case, I know that the first weekend I had our two for a solid 48 hours I was so worried they might miss their mother that I crammed in more fun than you might expect from a week in Disney World.

That was when I met Moelwyn. "You want to relax a bit," he said to me as I looked anxiously for the ice-cream van. "When their mum comes back she wants them reasonably sane."

Ruth Gledhill attends a Mothering Sunday service run by the controversial vicar, Eve Pitts

Daffodils and hymns amid the graffiti

AMID the bleakness of the sprawling estate, it was easily missed. I drove past it several times, not realising that the tiny, drab, one-storey brick building with sloping roof and graffiti-covered brown door was the place I was seeking. There was no signpost, no notice of services and it was named after no saint, or at least none that appears in the church's calendar.

Not until I saw a grey-haired man pinning a piece of paper to a council billard, directing traffic across a road of rubble into the estate, did I realise that the building I had dismissed as a garage or storage hut was in fact the Church of England in Druids Heath, the place where England's first black woman team vicar, the Rev Eve Pitts, has been consigned to serve out her licence.

Since Mrs Pitts, supported in the congregation by her three children and her husband Anthony, arrived here in December the congregation has blossomed from a dozen to more than 40.

One, Sheila MacLennan, has been attending church here every week for 25 years. In that time she has seen the Roman Catholics and Christadelphians build new churches for their communities, but entreaties for a new Anglican church building to serve the 2,000-plus families on the Druids Heath estate have so far been unsuccessful. Instead, the members of the established church make do with the council-owned community centre, unless they own a car or can endure the wait for a bus to take them to the 13th-century parish church of St Nicolas, about a mile away.

NEWSTEAM

The Rev Eve Pitts, England's first black woman team vicar

Many of the congregation were refugees from St Nicolas, having made the journey up the hill from the more comfortable surrounds of Kings Norton to support Mrs Pitts, who formerly ran the morning family service at the main parish church. The Bishop of Birmingham, the Right Rev Mark Santer, sent Mrs Pitts to Druids Heath and asked her to resign as team vicar of the Kings Norton group of churches after she stood up in a pew during a service at St Nicolas last year and accused the team rector, the Rev Martin Leigh, of using her "as a doormat".

Apart from referring at the end to the "wounds" suffered in those present over the past weeks, Mrs Pitts made no mention of the dispute which has made headlines in local and national media.

This was Mothering Sunday, as well as the Feast of the Transfiguration, and baskets of yellow daffodils glowed at the front of the hall as the straightforward communion service progressed. Later, these were handed round by children to the congregation. Mrs Pitts gave us a warm welcome. "It is good to be here once again in the house of the Lord," she said. "It is always good when God's people come together. So let us be silent as we contemplate the main reason why we are here in God's presence this morning." Our pianist, Ray Aldington, had been leading the ringers at St Nicolas at their morning service and was late, so we sang the first two hymns unaccompanied.

Mrs Pitts, an impassioned and inspired speaker, reminded us of the Gospel commandment: love your neighbour as yourself. "There is no other commandment greater than this," she said. In her sermon she combined the two festivals, first acting out with great humour the biblical story of Hannah pleading with God for a child, and the subsequent fate of the son she was given, Samuel. A civil servant before she was ordained, she has a gift for oratory. "We all know that Samuel grew up to be a wonderful man," she said. "So you see, God is never, ever short of surprising us."

Earlier, visiting St Nicolas, a church of impressive and historic beauty, it was easy to see why anyone would want to be vicar or rector there. But I could not help reflecting that Druids Heath needs Mrs Pitts and her congregation more. Maybe this unfortunate dispute will in succeeding years come to provide just evidence of the mysterious workings out of the purpose of God.

● *Manningford Hall, Manningford Road, Druids Heath, near Kings Norton, Birmingham, West Midlands.*

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You need an Olga to clear your path

Alexander Chancellor, visiting Russia for the first time, would have been lost without his guide

The guide who took me around St Petersburg — let us call her Olga — was nice but big. I had been warned about this when I was met at the airport by one of the other members of staff from the travel agency. Olga would be picking me up next morning at my hotel, I was told. How would I recognise her? There would be no problem, was the reply. She was, well, very large.

I first saw Olga squeezing herself into a segment of the revolving door of the Grand Hotel Europe. A few seconds later she spun out into the lobby, where I was waiting to meet her. She was a young woman in her twenties but broader than any babushka. Out of consideration for me, if not for the chauffeur whom she held pinned against his door, she let me sit alone in the back of our car during our travels around town.

She was an intelligent and interesting woman who had given up a job as a lawyer to look after her baby and who was totally committed to the new capitalist Russia which had allowed her and her husband to buy their flat, own a car and take holidays in Finland. She was terrified that the communists might some time return to power and take her flat away.

I had never been to Russia before, and after a day or two I realised how dependent on Olga I was. Russia may now be eager to attract tourists, but it still does not make life easy for them. The Grand Hotel Europe is excellent — reputedly the best hotel in Russia — and it is where President Clinton stayed on his visit to St Petersburg last year. But it is expensive and, being Swedish-owned and managed, is far from typical.

Unless you can speak Russian (and I cannot) it is hard to get around without an interpreter. Hardly anyone can speak English and Russians as a rule do not seem keen to help foreigners. Even getting into museums is not easy. There seem to be various different kinds of ticket and mysterious bureaucratic rules administered by ill-tempered babushkas who know not a word of any foreign language. You definitely need an Olga to clear your path.

Even in the Hermitage, the former Imperial Winter Palace which houses one of the world's greatest art collections, much of the labelling is only in Russian. Without Olga, I often would not have known what I was looking at. Her only defect as a guide was a tendency to switch suddenly from intelligent conversation into a robotic patter when describing some tourist attraction. This must be a danger for all guides who have made the same tours a thousand times, especially if they used to be employed by the old communist travel agency Intourist.

St Petersburg is just as beautiful as it is cracked up to be, but it is best to forget the appalling cost in human lives exacted by Peter the Great in his sudden whimsical determination to create, in 1703, a new capital in the remotest corner of his empire. It has been estimated that about 100,000 workmen died during the first year of construction. They had to work without food and without tools, carrying earth around in their smocks.

What they created — on a network of rivers making St Petersburg almost as watery as Venice — is a baroque city of great architectural beauty and serenity, but lacking perhaps the warmth and geniality of Western cities of that period.

The Tsars are partly to blame for this. They could not control their yearning for grandeur and opulence. When you tour the Hermitage, you cannot understand why the revolution came so late. How much gold leaf, alabaster and lapis lazuli does a monarch have to acquire before a people decides to put its foot down? You ask the same question with even greater force when you visit Francesco Rastrelli's amazing 18th-century Catherine Palace at Pushkin, south of St Petersburg, where more than 105,000 kilograms of gold were used to decorate the façade, gates and garden statues and then almost immediately wore off.

> Russia does not make life easy for its tourists

I was in St Petersburg during the summer period known as the White Nights, when it is not supposed to get dark. In fact, the sky goes a gloomy sort of grey after midnight and is fairly dark a couple of hours after that. Nevertheless, you tend to stay up late and walk up and down Nevsky Prospekt — the city's long and imposing main street — wondering what to do.

You stick to the busy Nevsky Prospekt because the guide has warned you to avoid the empty side streets where you might be mugged.

There have been so many reports of crime and violence running out of control in Russia since the collapse of communism that the timid visitor is given to perhaps undue caution, since at no time in either St Petersburg or Moscow did I stumble into any menacing situations. But then, you usually do not if you are being cautious.

Surprisingly, given St Petersburg's pleasant summer climate, it has few pavement cafés, but there are some good restaurants. I particularly liked the Adamant, near St Isaac's Cathedral at the bottom of the Nevsky Prospekt.

The Russians seem to be rather good at creating brand-new "traditional" restaurants which look as if they have been there for 100 years, and the Adamant — a compelling name — is one of them. The place is charming and cosy, the food is good and the service friendly. But I had to wait 45 minutes for a bowl of borsch. Despite the free market, restaurant service in Russia is still painfully slow.

For all his efforts, Peter the Great did not manage to create a convincing capital city up there next to Finland. St Petersburg may be Russia's centre for rock music and it may, like Moscow, have a thriving mafia whose members are identified by their fast German cars and indifference to red traffic lights; but it feels provincial. As soon as you arrive in Moscow, you are struck by the different order of bustle.

The ancient Russian capital has become, since communism, like a giant, chaotic bazaar, full of McDonald's, Pizza Huts, British-style pubs, cheap Italian restaurants and other Western nonsense. I stuck my British plastic card into a wall and extracted thousands of roubles from a cash dispenser (and you need a great many thousands since the exchange rate is about 8,000 roubles to the pound).

Moscow is an ugly city, though there are buildings within it of extraordinary beauty and spiritual power. The big surprise was St Basil's Cathedral in Red Square, a church endlessly photographed and used as a backdrop by television reporters and therefore it can seem overfamiliar. In fact, it is quite magical.

Russian Orthodox churches are extremely beautiful and especially intriguing to the Western eye because of their deliberate rejection of symmetry. They also come in large groups. Within the Kremlin, for example, there are many churches, including three cathedrals. Monasteries may contain half a dozen or more.

It is worth visiting the Novodevichy Convent in Moscow — a marvellous ensemble of 16th and 17th-century religious buildings — and the monastery at Zagorsk, 45 miles north-east of the capital. For 500 years this was Russia's most important pilgrimage centre and accommodates at least seven churches within its walls. The wooden dolls-inside-dolls are made there, including ones of the British Royal Family all packed inside John Major.

But there are other things to entertain the visitor to Moscow — the bars, the casinos, the general hubbub. In the Old Arbat, a pedestrianised street full of hawkers and street musicians, I had the option of having my photograph taken with the following props: a horse, a bear, a monkey, an eagle or a snake.

My departure was preceded by a visit to the opera — a vulgar production of *La Traviata* at the Bolshoi — and dinner at the Metropol Hotel next door. On the wine list of the humblest of the hotel's several restaurants was a bottle of Petrus costing $2,950, obviously intended for a Russian mafia millionaire to impress his girls with. It is a bit of a shock, going to Russia from the West and feeling poor.

WORLD PICTURES

Skyline of St Basil's Cathedral in Red Square, Moscow, built in 1550 and still full of extraordinary spiritual power. Left: a wooden doll of Boris Yeltsin

The Hermitage houses a wonderful art collection

RUSSIA FACT FILE

■ **Steppes East (01285-810267) arranges tailormade visits to St Petersburg or Moscow with prices from £660 per person for three nights' bed and breakfast at the Grand Hotel Europe in St Petersburg and £750 per person for three nights' bed and breakfast at the Metropol Hotel in Moscow. Both are five star and include return BA flights and transfers**

■ **Tickets for ballet or opera at the Mariinsky Theatre (home of the Kirov) in St Petersburg or the Bolshoi in Moscow can be arranged at £42 per person.**

■ **Visitors should carry ID at all times. Incidents of mugging, theft and pickpocketing are increasing especially Moscow and St Petersburg. Tourists are advised to dress down, be vigilant, beware of groups of young vagrants, and to keep expensive jewellery, watches and cameras out of sight.**

■ **Visas are required.**

■ **Seek medical advice before travelling**

■ **Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: *Petersburg*, by Andrei Bely (Penguin, £7.99). *One Hot Summer in St Petersburg*, by Duncan Fallowell (Vintage, £6.99). *St Petersburg*, by Rob Humphreys and Dan Richardson (Rough Guides, £8.99).**

هكذا من الأصل

America: Way down upon the Mississippi, a 'hell on earth with bells attached'; plus sailing in Chesapeake Bay

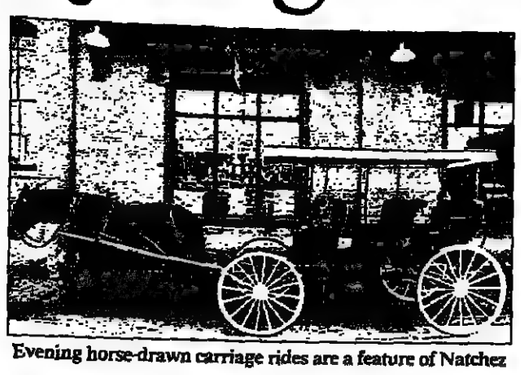
King Cotton's bawdy nights

Natchez, a town of memories on the River Mississippi, changed hands so regularly in the 18th century — French rule one year, British the next, then Spanish to American — that it gained a rakish reputation as a spy town. It had beautiful women, dashing mariners and louche bawds. It was the darnedest place south of Philadelphia, and it even had its own sovereign: King Cotton.

These days Natchez has not changed much in size. While other such towns have grown into huge conurbations, Natchez has retained its dusty, hat-tipping airs and still has a population under 20,000. There is little night life, the river, once packed with trading barges, is muddy and empty, and the locals sit around chewing toothpicks and jawing. The one thing Natchez does have is a selection of *Gone With the Wind*-style antebellum houses, which is why we went there.

Arriving from Britain you are struck at once by the elasticity of the spoken vowels. The houseboy (yes, he was black, but the term somehow fitted all the male staff, regardless of colour) at the Monmouth Plantation greeted us with delight and entered into an amusing discourse about the guest facilities, rules and a basic history. Palladian and proud Monmouth, built in 1818, was the home of General John Quitman, an early Mississippi governor who served with valour in the Mexican War. Or rather "wor".

Our houseboy may well have been hamming up the drawl, but it was fun. So was our room: a four-poster bed and creaking floorboards. The handle on the old door was loose as an old terrier's teeth and the furniture looked antique. The house was bought in recent years and largely restored by a suntanned couple from California (the lady of the manse has hung her photograph in a golden frame on the first landing, a spectacular monument to her taste) and the limited number of main-house bedrooms has been augmented with garden cottages. The plantation will organise evening horse-drawn carriage rides of Natchez.



Evening horse-drawn carriage rides are a feature of Natchez

The Monmouth is not the grandest of the mansions of Natchez, but it is well-appointed, has a lovely back porch area, with balcony and wicker chairs, and the dining room is splendid. Diners sit at one long table, which is adorned with silver, good china and linen napkins. The conversation one night was sparky, the next night dull, but the food was good both nights.

The drive from New Orleans airport to Natchez takes you through gentle countryside, but with fewer people and a warmer climate. If passing by, stop for coffee in St Francisville, a historical grace note of a village which was once an independent country.

This being the South, the food includes scone-style "biscuits", gumbo stews and "grits" (a little like porridge) for breakfast, best eaten with a knob of butter and some salt.

Cotton made Natchez wealthy, and it was the demand for labour that supported old South's slave trade. New Yorkers, if they hear mention of Natchez, are still inclined to call it "the capital of racism", but that is clumsy and unfair. Natchez people are civil and respect history. Down by the waterfront you can almost smell the history. Natchez-under-Hill, as this area is called, was notorious for its loose morals as rivermen took their pleasure.

Today, two casino riverboats have restored a sense of mischief to the waterfront, and there is a good bar in which to brace yourself for the walk back up the hill. From the top, as you gaze down on what remains of once thriving Silver Street, it is hard to believe that this was the fleshy, raucous place described by a 19th-century writer as "hell on earth, with bells attached".

Natchez was discovered around 1682 by a Spanish adventurer, Hernando De Soto. It is a place that wallows in its history, and our bedroom reading included a thick biography of the Confederate General Robert E. Lee. Some of the stories illustrate the toughness of early pioneers.

Among the more distinguished antebellum mansions, are Stanton Hall, which was built by a doomed Ulsterman, and Longwood, a circular creation which was brilliantly innovative for its time but never completed. Both houses are briskly run by the Natchez Pilgrimmage Garden Club, a society of matrons who escort tours with wit and an elegant heel.

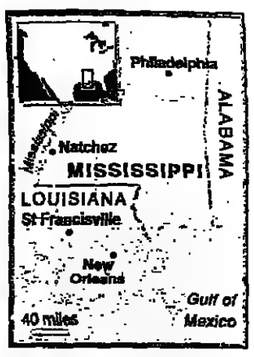
The sorry story of Longwood, left half built by workmen who fled north at the start of the Civil War, is the stuff of a book but is also, perhaps, a metaphor for what happened to Natchez. Antebellum, its mansions grew. Postbellum, the caravan of history moved out of town, leaving modern Natchez all the more likeable.

QUENTIN LETTS

● *The author was the guest of Monmouth Plantation.*

D. DONNE BRYANT

Natchez is the darnedest town these days: not what it was. Even the old gas station has been turned into a restaurant



FACT FILE

■ Northwest Airlines (0990 561000) flies from London to New Orleans, via Detroit from £327 return; from New Orleans to Natchez is about three hours' drive. Alternatively, the same airline flies from London to Jackson from £327 return; Jackson to Natchez is a two-hour drive.

■ To hire a car at the airport, you will need passport, driving licence and credit card. Expect to pay from about £30 a day.

■ Monmouth Plantation, 36 Melrose Avenue, Natchez (0800 964470, or 001 601 442 5852), from $125 (about £75) a night to $350 for suites, including full Southern breakfast. Dinner is $37.

■ Reading: *Natchez — Mississippi Old Glory*, by Jonathan Raban (Picador, £6.99). *Life on the Mississippi*, by Mark Twain (OUP, £5.99). *The Smithsonian Guide to Historic America: The Deep South* (Distrib. Tiptree, £11.99).

Stanton Hall, Natchez

Fantasy land for yachties

If you are a weekend estuary sailor on your 24ft yacht of mature age, which you have anti-fouled and glass-papered ready for launching in our sub-Arctic May, it is a fair bet that you fantasise about a big 40ft Bermudan in blue water with the temperatures in the 70s.

There is, indeed, such a wonderland. It is attainable at a cost, which is cheaper per night per sleeping berth than a night's B&B in a British pub. The place is Chesapeake Bay on the eastern coast of America: 200 miles long, mostly less than 20 miles wide. Baltimore dominates the northern end of the bay and Newport News guards the Atlantic. Chesapeake is user-kindly to the cautious weekend sailor. The difference between high tide and low tide is about a foot and a half, so there are no ripping currents to contend with. If you do something silly and run aground you are unlikely to rip the underside of your boat on the muddy bottom.

The bay makes its presence felt on a grand scale. The two bay bridges — at the southern extremity and across the mid-bay near Annapolis — are engineering wonders. About 20 rivers flow into the bay, all of them the size of the Thames at Tilbury. Together, they add up to 3,100 miles of coastline, most of it navigable. You could spend a lifetime exploring the creeks and crannies. And what poetic names the rivers have — a mixture of Indian and English evocations left by the early immigrants: you have the Sassafras, Choptank, Wicomico, Tred Avon, Potomac, Patapsco, Pocomoke, Patuxent, Miles, Chester, Servern, Elk, Gunpowder, Magothy.

Beautiful coves and anchorages abound and there is usually 8ft-10ft of water near the banks, so the yachts can snuggle up to the tree-lined shore. There are splendid marinas, with every conceivable comfort: power sockets for the yacht, easily accessible water lines, ice-dispensing machines every few yards, swimming pools, showers, launderettes and cocktail bars.

A night's berthing in a marina costs about $2 (about £1.25) a foot length. Or you can drop your anchor in a beautiful quiet baylet, bordered by the elegant, columned mansions which suggest serious old Yankee money and which have fast powerboats and 40ft ketches moored alongside. Or, again, you can pick up a mooring buoy 20 yards from the parade ground at the United States Navy Academy at Annapolis and, as you enjoy breakfast, watch the midshipmen and women doing their morning drill.

Herons and ospreys are abundant. The ospreys nest atop the navigation beacons and take no notice as your yacht slides by 15ft away as they are giving their chicks a fresh fish breakfast. But stop your boat to get a better picture and Mother Osprey raises out of the nest and spreads her wings, making a menacing statement.

> 'Hide the gin and tonic bottles'

The only qualification required by the charterer Sailing Emporium is to fill in a questionnaire on safety issues, particularly collision avoidance.

On busy weekends, the Maryland Environment Police keep an eye open for yachties, who have over-indulged the grog ration. They ask to board to inspect the ship's papers.

On one such visit, my crew managed to get the gin and tonic bottles stowed away in time though a bowlful of limes might have looked suspicious to a trained eye.

My daughter was ready with a line if we were questioned about this. "We were just taking precautions," she would have explained, pointing to the limes, "in case we had an outbreak of scurvy."

DAVID NICHOLAS

● *The Sailing Emporium, PO Box 597, 21144 Green Lane, Rock Hall, Maryland, USA 21661 (001 410 778 1342 fax 001 410 778 3264)*
Yachts can be hired from $1,300 (£775) a week for a 34-footer.

Indonesia: You can be both jungle hunter and bon viveur in the country where wildlife meets nightlife...

Meet the king of the swingers

I have always regarded adventure holidays, like working breakfasts, as the introduction of unnecessary effort to a time when the minimum should be expected of one's body. Indonesia changed my mind. It is a country where the traveller can be Joseph Conrad after breakfast, voyaging by sampan through reefs; Orde Wingate in the afternoon, ploughing through the jungle; and Sir Stamford Raffles in the evening, enjoying a gin sling in air-conditioned comfort before dinner.

And cocktail hour, even for the laziest of lounge lizards, has a special charm if the first sip of sundowner follows a full day drinking in the sights of Asia's most diverse nation.

The traveller who wants to combine wildlife with nightlife should venture north and west in Indonesia, as I did, to the island of Sumatra. A long banana of land which bisects the Equator, it mirrors Indonesia in its diversity with around 12 different peoples as well as its own elephants, rhinos, tigers and, most famously, orang-utans.

I concentrated on exploring northern Sumatra, making the regional capital, Medan, my base. A rapidly growing town, its distinctiveness rests in the collection of Dutch colonial buildings in the centre. Typical is the palace which belonged to the Sultans of Medan. Muslim princelings who were Dutch puppets, their home has been restyled as a museum.

As someone who likes game rotten and stilton runny, I was charmed by the gentle decay of the palace; the skewwhiff portraits of turbanned and frock-coated sultans, the sepia daguerreotypes of scheming relations and the throne with a cushion bearing the imprint of too many visitors' bottoms. The melancholy appeal of the palace is all the greater because one wing still houses the current sultan's family. The womenfolk knit on the verandah as dusk falls.

For all its charm, Medan is more base than destination. From its precincts, it is only a couple of hours along not-so-beaten tracks to the rainforests of the interior. Guides are necessary, obliging, charming and cheap. My own, Anwar ("as in Sadat, sir"), spoke better English than most London cabbies and smilingly endured a long trek at tropical temperatures without a gulp from the water bottle (it was Ramadan) but always with an eye for the unexpected.

He drew my attention to butterflies larger than any a European cornfield could boast, monkeys travelling through the trees like acrobats and glorious wild flowers just off the jungle pathway.

The highlight of my time in Sumatra was a trip, by foot, rope bridge and canoe to the orang-utan rehabilitation centre near Bahorok. Baby orang-utans are kidnapped by poachers, sold as pets and performing curios, and then abandoned when they become too large to cosset and control.

To wean them back to the wild, a slice of national park has been given up to allow rangers to feed them in view of the public while they relearn the laws of the jungle.

Orang-utans were held to be degenerate humans when first encountered and, observing their care for the young, their sympathetic features and their gentle habits, it was easy to understand the early explorers' error; given how they have been treated by humans, it is we who are degenerate.

One delight denied early explorers but available to the modern traveller is Indonesian nightlife. Medan is no Bangkok but it is all the better for it. After a hard day on foot nothing is nicer than travelling by trishaw (a cross between sedan chair and sidecar) to an old colonial bar for an old colonial drink.

Appetite whetted, there are any number of restaurants where a succession of courses, all delicious, will only gently dent the wallet while stretching the stomach. Indonesian cuisine has the inventiveness of Chinese, the spice of Thai, superior seafood and a tradition of large servings.

After Sumatra, I travelled to two islands which offer a more conventional tourist package. Batam and Bintan lie just south of Singapore and have become playgrounds for that republic's new rich. Batam is still developing its appeal but its combination of some of the cheapest high-tech shopping in the world, flawless golf courses and karaoke bars out of *Miss Saigon* has already won it thousands of Singaporean fans and made it an authentic Asian holiday resort.

Bintan caters more explicitly for Western tastes. The south of the island is a treasure-trove of 18th-century Malay civilisation, the north has been transformed into an extensive beach resort with sandy expanses, jetskiing, scuba diving and newly sculpted links.

Bintan's gentle greens are the perfect place to recover from the Sumatran wilds. It is Indonesia's charm that it comprehends both attractions and the longer the traveller has to enjoy both the more rewarding any trip will be.

MICHAEL GOVE

● *The author was a guest of Garuda Indonesia and the Indonesia Tourism Promotion Board.*

KONRAD WOTHE

The first explorers to see orang-utans thought they were degenerate versions of human beings

■ *Michael Gove flew* courtesy of Garuda Indonesia, which offers a twice-weekly service to Jakarta from Gatwick on Mondays and Saturdays from £534. From April there will be flights on Wednesdays. Reservations can be made on 0171-486 3011 or 0161-834 3747. Cheaper flights are often available through travel agents.

■ Garuda Indonesia Holidays (01753 687676) offers tours of Java, Sumatra and Bintan. Seat-only fares to Jakarta or Bali start from about £500, with seven-night all-inclusive holidays from £600.

■ Singapore Airlines (0181-747 0007) offers a midweek return fare to Jakarta at £580 plus £10 airport tax. The offer ends on March 31.

■ Michael Gove flew to Medan from Jakarta by *Merpati, the internal airline* of Garuda Indonesia. It flies daily and prices start from £140 one-way. Further information is avalable from Garuda on 0171-486 3011.

■ His intinerary was sponsored by the Indonesia Tourism Promotion Board and arranged by Pacto Tours, PO Box 7966, JKSKM, Jakarta 12370, (00 62 21 719 6550).

■ A reliable alternative to Pacto is Universal Tours and Travel, in Jakarta (00 62 21 690 1669).

■ Further information from the Indonesia Tourist Promotion Office, 3-4 Hanover Street, London W1R 9HH.

■ Travellers who are not with Pacto but wish to visit the orang-utan rehabilitation centre at Bohorok, North Sumatra, should contact Vayatour, also in Jakarta on 00 62 21 380 0202.

■ Malaria pills are a must. British tourists need not apply for visas in advance but passports must be valid for six months from the date of entry. As a (gently) Muslim country, dress should be modest everywhere except the beach. Pickpockets abound in the cities.

■ Reading: *Indonesia — Sumatra: Its History and People* by Edwin Loeb (OUP, £15.95). *Coolie* by Madelon H. Lulofs (OUP, £5.95). *Sumatra, Periplus Adventure Guide* (Periplus, £11.95). *Islands of Indonesia* by Violet Clifton (OUP, £9.99). *An Empire of the East* by Norman Lewis (Picador, £5.99). *Malay Archipelago* by Alfred Wallace (OUP, £13.95). *Indonesia Handbook* by Joshua Eliot (Footprint Handbooks, £14.99).

An Indonesian grain store

...but where the 20-year-old backpacker is told that he is doomed and is publicly humiliated as a footballer

At least the leeches appreciated me

Indonesia has 17,000 islands and a multitude of different tribes and influences. One day we could be thrashing our way through the buzzing cauldron that is the rainforest of North Sumatra, trying to fight off leeches to the echoing sounds of the monkeys and the exotic songs of the birds.

The next day we could be sitting peacefully at the pinnacle of the 9th-century Buddhist temple, Borobudur, absorbing the sun sinking behind and silhouetting one of its three encircling volcanoes. The richness of Indonesia's culture and geography makes ours seem pale indeed in comparison.

We travelled from North Sumatra to the province of Aceh, a Muslim heartland almost completely covered in rainforest. The jungle creates its own intense atmosphere: the constant cackling of monkeys, the nattering of birds and the occasional deliberate crack as a gibbon or orang-utan moves around high above in the sweltering foliage of the forest floor. The jungle was heavy with noise and atmosphere.

On a day's trek in the rainforest, more noticeable than the intense heat was our constant itching. When we finally stopped for something to eat I removed my shoes and socks to find an entire family of leeches bulging with the blood that they had sucked from my ankles. This rather spoilt my lunch.

Already feeling drained, I then attempted to cross some rapids where the bridge had collapsed. I was swept away and battered for about 20 metres down the river before our shrieking guide dragged me from the water.

He was far more amused than I was to find what was probably the same family of leeches still stuck to my stomach.

Despite the hilarity the Acehnese derive from leeches, they are unreservedly friendly people. And nowhere else is Sumatran Islam more deep-rooted or more open. This is most evident in Banda Aceh, the provincial capital; it is a town of stark colour, where the long black gowns worn by the women flit past the high white-washed walls and the mosques emblazoned in gold.

It was strange leaving these hardworking Muslims and their simple lifestyle to travel to Lake Toba, home of the mostly Christian Toba Batak people. They seem to be the most laid-back of all Sumatran tribes: waiters will sit and talk to you at the table, taxi drivers do their shopping while you are waiting in their taxi and all the shop-owners ask you how much you want to pay for a particular item. When you see where they live, however, it is easy to see why they are so relaxed about life.

It is one of the world's biggest and deepest lakes, cool and clouded because of its high altitude. In the middle of Lake Toba are the steep, green, treeless cliffs of Samosir island which project from its blue waters. Almost the size of Singapore, the island was created by two massive volcanic explosions thousands of years ago.

There are a large number of small settlements among which are scattered Christian tombs and ancient Batak shrines.

We then travelled through some of the villages along its coast to visit the monuments and see more Bataks — who were invariably reclined with a newspaper and a cigarette. Yet finally, at the village of Simanindo, we found some action in the form of a dance for tourists.

Utterly out of time and also out of step with each other, 20 or so miserable-looking Bataks of all shapes and sizes pranced about at random to an unearthly din, which was created by four more Bataks who were clattering wood on metal.

Finally, the audience was invited to join in the dance. The answer was an embarrassed but resounding "no".

The chants and dances supposedly symbolise prayers to God. I imagine those taking part were simply praying to be out of their extravagantly flamboyant garb and to be back indoors carving souvenirs or even — and more likely — watching television.

We left the island and headed to West Sumatra. Unlike the Bataks, the Minangkabau society is matrilineal whereby the eldest female owns all the property and money and these are inherited through the female line. The women consequently seem far more confident than other Sumatran females and there appears to be a remarkable sense of sexual equality.

Just 15 minutes from Bukittinggi, at Batagak village, every Saturday at 5pm thousands gather to watch two evenly matched buffalo engage in some kind of bovine boxing match.

The two animals are made angry, then lock horns, clashing frantically, often mutilating the head of their opponent. Finally, one bolts, pursued into the distance by his screaming owner who is followed by another buffalo, to the great amusement of the crowd. The word Minangkabau actually means "winning buffalo".

By now we were ready for Lake Maninjau. A smaller but more serene version of Toba, we found the water ideal for swimming and the climate and scenery were conducive to relaxation and meditation. From the minarets around the lake the word of Allah murmurs in the breeze five times a day across its still waters.

We accepted an invitation to a friend's home village five hours from Padang, set remote and high in the Marching mountains past Solok. The people there lived a combination of staunch Muslim and Minangkabau culture. Their ancestors had fled to this remote area many centuries ago so as to escape from white settlers. We felt rather anxious, being the first whites to visit the village for many months, but the inhabitants were hospitable and intensely interested in our presence.

Within two days we were drafted into the local soccer team to play the next-door village. Expecting nothing more than a kick-around, we arrived to a packed stadium with as lively a crowd as at any Manchester or Liverpool match. Their evident anticipation about their two new signings made us feel extremely nervous.

Despite visions of *Roy of the Rovers* before the match, optimism turned to humiliation. Every time we got the ball, a much faster and fitter Indonesian would tackle us to the groans of the crowd. The commentator, who never quite mastered our names, sounded more like a school PE teacher, screaming as we were tackled again and again. We felt totally responsible for the 3-0 defeat.

Despite our performances, however, the children still spoke to us, bombarding us with references to Western life, primarily about music and football. We had already realised it was imperative to know the words to the songs *Hotel California* and *Wonderful Tonight*. Any Sumatran who can hold a guitar, of which there are an abundance of badly tuned ones, can play either of these tunes with as much competence and undoubtedly more passion than either The Eagles or Eric Clapton.

We were made to feel simultaneously both within and very much outside of the culture, always welcomed by the young but often shunned by the old. I felt it was sad that so many of the glowing and animated eyes of the young would soon become so stern and disapproving.

Travelling from Sumatra to Jakarta was rather like being plucked from an empty, silent desert and dropped into the centre of a noisy and claustrophobic city. Jakarta's towering glass skyscrapers and sea of interconnected symmetrical highways were a far-distant cry from Sumatra's breeze block huts and mud tracks.

Java's forested and volcanic countryside is scattered with innumerable, crowded and animated settlements. The shabby swarms of *becaks* (rickshaws) and street-sellers intermingle with the reds and whites of elegantly dressed schoolchildren.

Moving on from Bandung to Yogyakarta was like experiencing a Hindu-Buddhist pilgrimage. The temples at Dieng, Borobudur, Mendut and Prambanan help to explain the spirituality of Java. The collapsed remnant of an ancient crater, Dieng plateau is 2km above sea level. Five temples at its centre stand to the three Hindu gods Brahma, Wisna and Shiva and ornate stone representations of each still exist on the outside walls.

The whole area is like something from *The Lord of the Rings*. Ash-grey clouds of unbearable sulphur bubble up from the nearby mud ponds, yet the same element is the reason for the dazzling colouring of Lake Warna.

It is understandable why Semar cave, which overlooks its vividly shaded waters, is an ancient place of meditation.

At this cave we met a Muslim who had been fasting for 42 days. He was a rack of bones with a sheet wrapped around his stomach, but his constant grin made me aware of his contentment: he was without any material desire.

His odd appearance and mystical tone assured me that he was about to make some revelations as to my destiny. When he blandly told me that I was doomed, I was obviously vexed but then I thought that he might well have been at the football match.

In need of a spiritual uplift, we went to the temple of Borobudur. Built in the 9th century, the temple is situated on a large hillock about 1km square. The thick forest below stretches into the distance to the slopes of the three volcanoes which cloak the horizon.

The temple's nine levels, forming a pyramid, represent the nine stages of Buddhism and its black rock is intricately embossed with many Buddhist symbols: 504 Buddhas adorn its exterior, which leads upwards to the central pinnacle, nirvana.

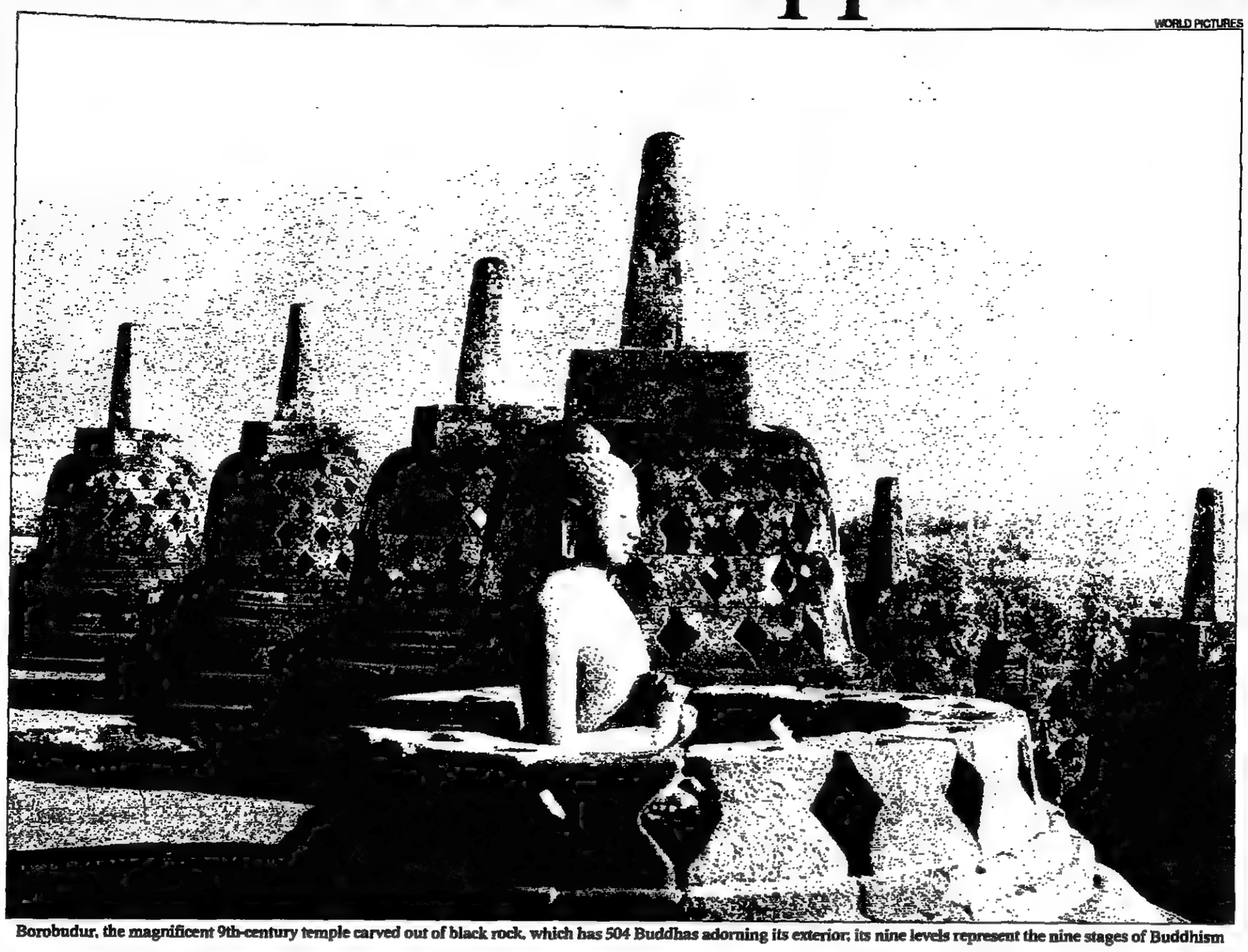
Batak cannibals hunting in the Sumatran rainforest, Minangkabau religiously ploughing their lakeside paddy fields or Javan sultans dealing in the Jakartan stock market: the host of different cultural and ethnic groups in Indonesia seemed to a Westerner to have three things in common: their love of satellite television, clove cigarettes and karaoke.

The Indonesians I met were never happier than when watching a dubbed martial arts film on MTV with microphone in one hand and clove fag in the other.

WILLIAM GILROY

● *The author was assisted by STA, the Student Travel Association and the Indonesia Tourism Promotion Board.*

WORLD PICTURES



Borobudur, the magnificent 9th-century temple carved out of black rock, which has 504 Buddhas adorning its exterior; its nine levels represent the nine stages of Buddhism

INDONESIA FACT FILE

■ STA (0171-361-6262) has flights to Medan via Kuala Lumpur or Singapore from £587 return. There are student/youth flights to Kuala Lumpur from £419, with a connecting flight from £110. Or fly to Penang from £517 and take a £10 ferry.
Garuda Indonesia has a twice-weekly service to Jakarta from Gatwick. Seat-only fares to Jakarta start from about £500 with seven-night inclusive holidays from about £600. Reservations 0171-486 3011 or 0161-834 3747.

Traditional costumes are extravagantly flamboyant

■ Tour Operators that feature Java and Sumatra include Garuda Indonesia Holidays (01753 687676) and Premier Holidays (01223 510677).

■ Adequate guest houses cost from £2-£7 per night usually including breakfast.

■ Itineraries can be arranged by Pacto Tours, PO Box 7966, JKSKM Jakarta 12730 (62 21 719 6550).

■ Further information: Indonesia Tourist Promotion Office, 3-4 Hanover Street, London W1R 9HH (0171-493 0030).

■ Useful travel tips: Passports must be valid for at least six months and proof of return or onward passage is required. The best time to travel is during the dry season, generally from April to October.
No inoculations are compulsory but a course of malaria tablets is strongly recommended.
Knowledge of English cannot be relied on. Buy a small phrasebook of Bahasa Indonesia.

WORD WATCHING

Answers from page 27

HEGIRA
(a) The flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Yathrib, 16 July, 622. Yathrib soon came to be called Medina, the City of the Prophet. From the Arabic *hejira* the departure.

PHALANX
(c) The battle order of the heavy infantry (hoplites) of ancient Greece, made famous by Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great. The hoplites with lances of 16ft length or longer and with shields joined, were drawn up in from 12 to 16 close parallel lines. Alexander used a 16-rank formation, the first five ranks carrying their spears horizontally and the remainder carrying theirs across the shoulder.

CAMILLA
(b) In Roman legend a virgin queen of the Volscians. She helped Turnus against Aeneas. Virgil (*Aeneid*, vii, 809) says she was so swift that she could run over a field of corn without bending a blade, or make her way over the sea without wetting her feet.

BELTANE
(c) In Scotland, May Day, from the Old Scotch. Gaelic *bealtainn*, the derivation is uncertain but it is not connected with *bual*. Also an ancient Celtic festival when *bel-fires* were kindled on the hilltops and cattle were driven between the flames, either to protect them from disease, or as a preparatory to sacrifice.

Belgium: An hour and a half across the sea, prepare to be surprised by the Flemish love of the good life

Keep looking up – but don't fall in

We have still to get used to the idea of how easy it is to cross the Channel. And I do not mean just to France and just by the tunnel. My recent excursion was by the catamaran service from Ramsgate to Ostend, a 90-minute journey for what used to take more than four hours.

This part of Europe or, more particularly, the Flemish sector which cuts out Brussels, is little known to British tourists who somehow cannot bring themselves to believe there are delights so close to home. Prepare to be surprised. Belgium combines the northern European respect for a smooth, trouble-free way of life with the southern love of good living.

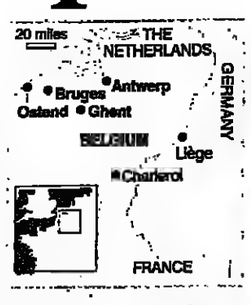
Starting with Bruges, a mere quarter-hour train ride from Ostend, I felt like a time traveller pitched back some 500 years. Bruges made its name and wealth as one of the great trading centres of medieval Europe. In the 1300s, merchants gathered here from all over the Continent and beyond to buy Flemish cloth made from English wool. It did not last. The river link to the sea became a mud flat and was never cleared.

Bruges enjoyed a brief revival in the 15th century when the Flemish school of artists led by Jan Van Eyck, who are now on view at the Groeninge Museum, created a subtlety of tone and colour that still amaze. But, thereafter, decline set in until the age of tourism. Now Bruges is praised as one of the great survivors, a living model of the transition from medieval to Renaissance culture. You can see it in the cobbled streets lined with gabled houses and from the stone bridges over the patchwork of canals, but most of all you can see it in two neighbouring squares, the Markt and the Bourg, which command the town centre.

The imposing façades of civic buildings tell their own story but pride of place goes to the Markt Square Belfry, a typically Flemish symbol of power and privilege. The reward for climbing 365 steps is a panoramic view. The reward for staying below is a peel of 47 bells (total weight 27 tons), a resounding proclamation of past glories.

A stone's throw away, the Bourg has within its compass, so it is said, the progression of architecture from the 10th to the 18th centuries. This is a bit of a cheat because the 10th-century cathedral no longer exists, but the foundations are here and on view on the lower levels of the Holiday Inn.

This archaeological find, revealed only a few years ago when the hotel was being built, has been wonderfully restored to double as a small museum and as a subterranean venue. Unfortunately, Holiday Inn is not too keen to reveal its hidden depths to non-paying customers. But public access is part of the deal with the city council. Just bowl in and make for the down staircase. From a luxury of choice, the other must-see of the Bourg is the Town Hall, one of the earliest in the Gothic style, with a vaulted central hall that is a riot of colour.



Belgium is renowned for culinary excellence but Bruges is special because the setting is so exceptional. My treat was dinner at the Duc de Bourgoyne which is close by the canal with an outlook of Venetian splendour. I had langoustines in a delicious artichoke sauce followed by brill with asparagus. The meal came to £40 with half a bottle of good bordeaux an additional £15. To economise is not necessarily to lose on quality. A three-course menu at the Restaurant de Stove on Kleine St is less than £20. Gino and Erica, a husband and wife partnership, give the friendliest of welcomes. Like everyone in the restaurant trade they speak excellent English, not to mention French and German.

My next stop was Ghent — just half an hour from Bruges by train. Ghent is a busier version of Bruges. Their early histories overlap and both thrived on the cloth trade, but while Bruges settled for the quiet life, Ghent adapted to the age of industrialisation as well as preserving its history.

Take in the view from St Michael's Bridge which frames the three great towers of St Nicholas's Church, the Belfry and St Bavo's Cathedral which is medieval with a baroque interior — an extraordinary mix of the sombre and the flamboyant.

The cathedral is home to the best-loved Van Eyck, *The Mystic Lamb*, a collaborative effort with his brother Hubert, of whom little is known. Of the six panels of this majestic work, one is a copy which replaces the original stolen in the 1930s and never recovered. In trying to detect the fake, look out for the rider who bears a striking resemblance to Leopold III, Belgium's pre-war monarch.

Good advice in Ghent is to keep looking up. Above the shops and restaurants are splendid façades, not all of great age. One of the delights is the discovery of art nouveau and art deco exteriors in little side streets where the houses cling together at odd angles as if for mutual support. We had a leisurely lunch for about £40 at Cour St Georges, a restaurant in one of the oldest buildings in Ghent where the speciality is waterzooi, a rich creamy chicken and vegetable dish that is a meal in itself.

Just a short way on from Ghent, Antwerp is different again, a city of quiet charm and surprising attractions, at once a thriving community (Antwerp is the centre of the world's diamond trade) and a powerful draw for visitors who take pleasure from a cultural heritage that is as rich as it is varied. Antwerp came to prominence in the 16th century when it was the commercial and intellectual capital of Europe. It has had its ups and downs but without ever losing its identity, so today its people think of themselves as belonging to a city state rather than just a city.

This sturdy, some might say stubborn, independence shows in a succession of grand buildings including a rail station that looks like an oversized cathedral, Europe's only rival to Grand Central in New York. The real cathedral, a Gothic reach to heaven with vaulted chapels and vertiginous aisles, is in the last stage of an extensive cleaning and restoration. Rubens is much in evidence but, then, this is his city. There is Rubens' house and Rubens' workshop, even a church designed by Rubens. Much of his work is in the Museum of Fine Art, a heavyweight 19th-century structure where the galleries are of a height to take the mammoth canvases with space to spare. The walk back towards the cathedral is through cobbled squares lined with bars and restaurants. A real find is Neuze Neuze just off the market square where a four-course menu centred around fresh salmon in a garlic butter sauce is a little over £30.

And so back to Ostend. It is easy to bypass what might be just another ferry port. Seen from the harbour, Ostend shows the after-effects of being knocked about a bit in the war. Bomb damage has long since disappeared but in its place are the apartment blocks that disfigure every seaside town.

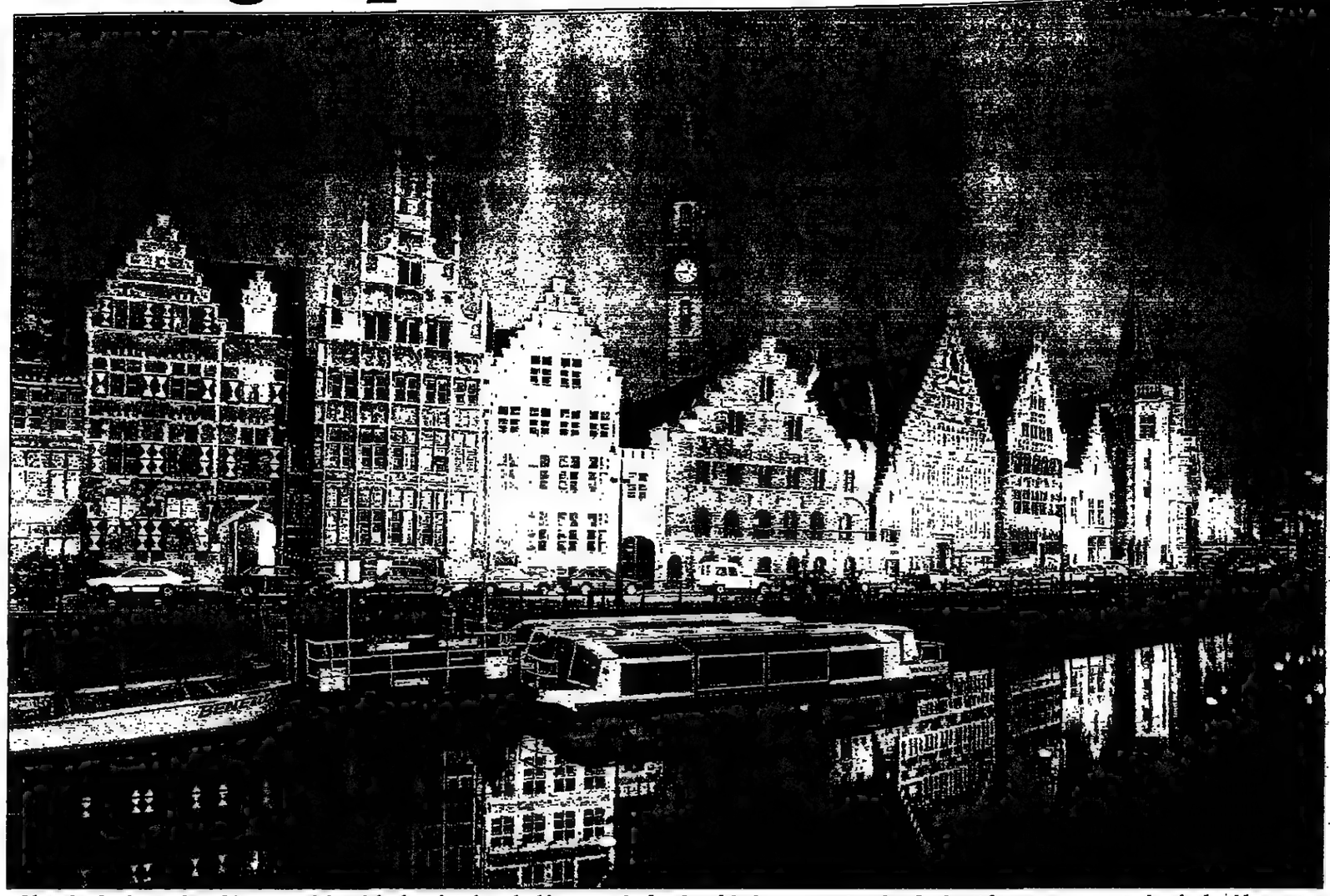
Perseverance reveals another town that is lively and appealing. To follow the broad promenade away from the docks is to discover the resort that Leopold II created in the early part of the century.

The first royal villa where Queen Victoria spent a holiday is still there (next to Tati's Jazz Bar, she would be surprised to know). The promenade, the racecourse and the broad avenues into town are witness to Leopold's ambition to make Ostend the "Queen of the Belgian coast" and fish restaurants with menus determined by the morning catch are almost beyond counting.

BARRY TURNER

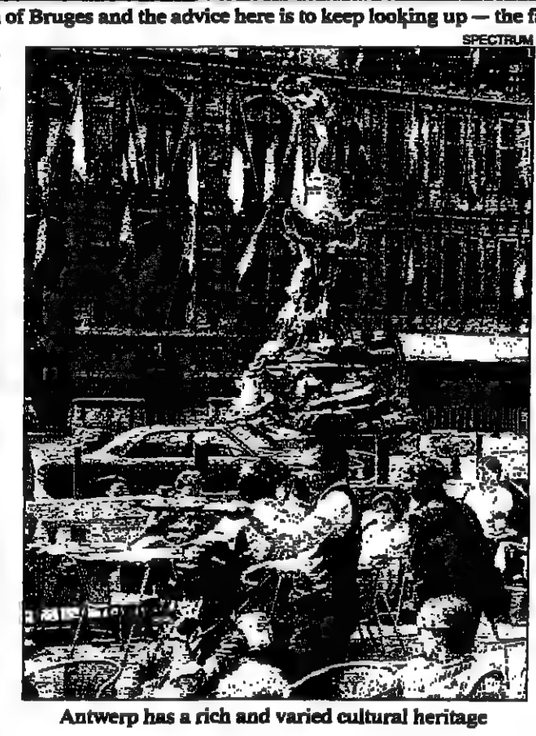
● *The author was a guest of the Belgian Tourist Board.*

PICTURES



Ghent is a busier version of Bruges and the advice here is to keep looking up — the façades of the houses are stunning. Look out for art nouveau exteriors in the side streets

SPECTRUM



Antwerp has a rich and varied cultural heritage

BELGIUM FACT FILE

■ Holyman Sally Ferries has up to seven round trips daily, sailing between Ramsgate and Ostend. The crossing time is 100 minutes. Prices for a five-day ticket are from about £109 for car, two adults and up to three children.
Duty-free shops are opening this spring in Ramsgate and Ostend.
For further information contact Holyman Sally Ferries on 0990 595522.

■ Belgian National Railways (information line: 0891 516444) has a five-day Railcard at £37.45 for five days' travel in a month.
Go Pass is for those aged under 26 for ten single trips, costing £25.27.

■ The author stayed at the Hotel de Orangerie, Kartuizerinnerstraat 10, B-8000 Bruges (00 32 50 34 16 49). The hotel has 19 rooms, all with private bathroom, colour television, radio, direct-dial telephone and mini-bar.
Price per person for bed and breakfast in a de luxe double or twin room is £144 (BFr55 to the pound).

■ The Belgium Tourist Board, 29 Princes Street, London W1R 7RG (0171-629 3977), with its own office, publishes details of short breaks available in Flanders in *The Flanders Experience*.

■ Recommended restaurants: Duc de Bourgoyne, 12 Huidenvettersplein, Bruges (about £40).
Restaurant de Stove, Kleine St — Amandstraat 4 Bruges (from £20).
Cour St Georges, Botermarkt 2, Ghent (meals about £40).
Neuze, Neuze, Wijngaardstraat 12-21, Antwerp (about £30).
Viskeuken, Kte. Koepoortstraat 10, Antwerp (about £20 for four-course menu).

■ Museums: Groeninge Museum, Bruges (entrance £3.50).
Museum of Fine Art, Antwerp (£2.70).

■ Reading: *The Sorrow of Belgium*, by Hugo Claus (Penguin, £7.99). *An Inland Voyage*, by Robert Louis Stevenson (in *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes & Selected Travel Writing*) (OUP, £4.99). *Flemish Cities Explored*, by Derek Blyth (Pallas, £9.95). *Cadogan Guide to Brussels, Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp*, by Antony Mason (Cadogan, £19.99).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Minnie happy returns to me

From Camilla Robinson, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

I AM no fan of Mickey and I had been dreading the inevitable visit to Disneyland Paris, especially since reading of Kevin McNeany's depressing experience. Since the first glitzy posters sent my children into raptures of excited anticipation, "When can we go?" was an oft repeated request. Then suddenly, one Tuesday, I relented — it was my birthday.

Within the space of 12 hours we had booked, packed and delivered ourselves to the gates of Davy Crockett's Ranch where we were greeted with the repetitive strains of *Davy Crockett* blaring from loudspeakers. My worst fears were being realised.

My spirits lifted, however, on arrival at our "log cabin" — set in a beautiful forest. It was spacious, well-equipped and spotlessly clean with both a television and a barbecue. We quickly unpacked and headed for the park.

I soon realised that fate had willed me to pick the best two days of the year to visit Disneyland Paris. As we drove through a vast tarmac desert of empty car parks on the approach to the main gates I could only shudder with horror at the thought of what it must be like when the car parks are full. On that particular day there was only a sprinkling of cars in the car park nearest to the main entrance. It was bitterly cold and we were heavily muffled. Then something remarkable happened.

AS WE approached the pink, sugar plum fairy facade of the Disneyland hotel, the grey clouds suddenly parted revealing a brilliantly blue sky and hot sun. Still hooked on the idea of queues, we looked for one to join. There weren't any. There followed a magical two days that left me stunned by the wonder of this fairytale land that I had convinced myself I would hate.

It was a dizzy rollercoaster ride of sheer fantasy through storybook worlds depicted in brilliant clarity. I flew with Peter Pan, danced with a ghost, climbed Swiss Family Robinson's tree house and rocketed into outer space. I spun in teacups at the Mad Hatter's tea party, got lost in a maze, touched a dragon and ate spicy ribs in a Wild West barn with foot-stamping, guitar-strumming cowboys.

Back home, life will never be quite the same. I'm living for my next fix of Disney magic. I think the children enjoyed it too.

● *We welcome letters on any aspect of holiday travel. Send them to Letters, Travel Department, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN or fax to 0171-782 5124.*

JILL CRAWSHAW'S TRAVEL TIPS

New year 1998 begins in Kerala

SEVEN nights B&B for £405 in Kerala (14 nights for £455) is the starting price for Inspirations's (01293 822244) winter 1997-98 programme to India and Kenya. The price is based on accommodation in the Green Valley guest house at Kovalam between December 29 and January 11, with even lower prices for those prepared to risk unnamed accommodation.

A 14-night holiday which includes a new three-night rice barge cruise along the Backwaters costs from £565. All-inclusive holidays in Goa's Calangute start at £499 during April (although eating in Goa's beach "shacks", rather than in the hotels, is fun and cheap); new birdwatching holidays (Goa is home to 350 species) cost from £619 a week, all prices including flights.

Inspirations is offering a week in Kerala, India, from £405, and two weeks from £565, including a cruise

Tunisian time

THE Oscar-nominated film *The English Patient* used stunning "Egyptian" senery but was actually filmed in Tunisia. This should help to revive its fortunes as a holiday destination. Many locations, including the desert scenes, can be easily visited on expeditions or tours available to those based at the beach resorts of Hammamet, Sousse or Monastir. Details from the Tunisian Tourist Office (0171-224 5561).

The old Bedu caravan post of Tozeur, the huge shimmering salt lake, the Chott el Jerid and nearby Saharan dunes served as the lovers' base camp in the film, while the sequences in Cairo's Medina were shot in Sfax, El Mahdia doubled as Tobruk, and Tunis as the Cairo of the 1930s. More strangely, Venice Lido's Hotel des Bains was the stand-in for Cairo's old Shepheard's Hotel, the wartime watering hole for explorers, diplomats and spies, which was destroyed in the 1950s.

Water wary

THE WORLDWIDE boom in water sports has brought in its wake far too many cowboy operators, according to the latest issue of *Holiday Which?* It reports that only two out of 21 centres inspected in Crete and the Costa del Sol were safe, and five were actually dangerous.

Holidaymakers should check buoyancy aids and equipment, see if there are clearly marked operating lanes and, for some water sports, check the presence of trained lookouts accompanying the driver of the towing boat.

French nights

THE essential guide for all those driving through France who prefer friendly, family-run establishments for their overnight stops (to the admittedly economic efficiency of the Formule One or Novotel chains) is the *Logis de France Guide 1997*, available from bookshops (£11.90) or from the French Government Tourist Office, Publications Department, 178 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AL (add £1 for postage and packing).

On average, rooms for two cost Fr222-Fr318 (about £24-£35), menus are Fr82-Fr196 (£9-£21), and a fixed-rate three-course regional Menu du Terroir has been introduced at Fr100-Fr120 (£11-£13.50).

Vietnam beach

AS VIETNAM starts to become a popular holiday destination, beach resorts are beginning to pop up in specialist operators' brochures. Asian Journeys (01604 234855), whose director, Craig Burkinshaw, spent two years leading tour groups, features the Ana Mandara, the first resort-style accommodation to open in Nha Trang, South Vietnam, offering facilities and standards equivalent to the three-star bungalow hotels of Thailand's Koh Samui or Phuket.

Other simpler hotels are also on offer, while Mr Burkinshaw tips the Vietnam-controlled island of Phu Quoc, off Cambodia, as a likely holiday discovery of the future.

Eleven nights B&B with eight nights in Ana Mandara and three nights in Saigon starts at £1,195, including flights.

City breaks

TWO-CENTRE city breaks in the United States and Italy can be arranged by Cresta Holidays (0990 561814): a two-night stay in New York with two nights in Chicago flying Heathrow/New York/Chicago/Heathrow costs from £517 on a room-only basis. New York can also be twinned with Boston or Washington.

Nearer home, the company offers two nights each in a choice of six Italian cities including Rome, Milan, Venice and Pisa. A two-night break in Rome, for example, and two in Milan, including all international and domestic connecting flights, costs from £413.

In training

SOME OF the world's most spectacular rail trips are offered by Great Rail Journeys (01904 679969), ranging from modest trips in the Alps to a 12-day Canadian Christmas and new year holiday. This includes Niagara Falls, the Rockies and Vancouver Island, linked by *The Canadian*, one of the world's great trains (from £1,390 including flights).

Nearer home, an escorted trip to Avignon, travelling by Eurostar and TGV, costs from £295 including three nights' accommodation. There is also a weekend break to the Rhine in Flames Festival in early May, with an evening river cruise for the firework festival and a day trip by steam train to the walled city of Ahrweiler. The price is £245 with rail travel from London.

Family fun

A NEW brochure, *100 Ideas for Families*, is free from the Austrian National Tourist Office (0171-629 0461) with details of family-friendly holidays, sports, cave visits and festivals. The Vienna section has details of the House of Butterflies; Teddy Bear Museum, vintage tram rides and dressing up as part of a tour of Schönbrunn Palace and the Hofburg. Another free publication, *Family Nests in Tyrol*, gives details of resorts which are "particularly geared to the wishes and needs of families with children".

Keen campers

IT IS useful to have a car on holiday, but it can be tedious getting it there. French Country Camping (01565 626266) lets the train take the strain of getting to some of its camping sites, and provides a self-drive car with unlimited mileage at the railway station. Campers can board Eurostar at Waterloo in London, change at Lille on to the TGV to the station nearest to the chosen site and pick up the hire car. From £745 for two adults and two children for seven days.

TRAVEL NEWS

Cut-price cruise for starters

■ P&O CRUISES (0171-800 2222) is tempting first-timers with a five-day sampler from £495 aboard its flagship *Oriana*. The cruise leaves Southampton on May 3, taking in La Coruna in northern Spain and the two French ports of La Pallice and Brest.

■ LE SHUTTLE and Stena Line followed P&O Ferries and Hoverspeed this week in extending advance booking offers. They will keep return fares below £100, compared with peak season prices of more than £330 last summer. P&O is offering any 1997 Dover-Calais return for £145 and Le Shuttle for £149 until April 30. Hoverspeed quotes £99 and Stena has cut 25 per cent from brochure prices for bookings by March 31.

■ PORTUGAL and the Caribbean are showing the biggest percentage increases — up more than 30 per cent — for summer holiday bookings, according to Thomas Cook. Spain and its islands occupy three of the top four slots, with the Greek Islands at number two. The only Top 10 country out of favour is Italy, down 4 per cent. Overall, summer sales are up 20 per cent.

■ THOMSON cut cruise prices this week by offering a two-week Caribbean holiday from £999 — and a one-week Red Sea cruises visiting Egypt, Jordan and Israel from £579.

■ THE STRENGTH of sterling against the French franc has made car rental firm Holiday Autos (0990 300400) cut prices by up to £140 for this summer. One week's hire now starts at £163 (down from £198) for the smallest car, a Peugeot 106 or similar. The biggest saving is £140 off a seven-seater Renault Espace or similar (£609 a week).

■ A 15-MINUTE thrice daily air service linking Gibraltar with three Moroccan cities begins today boasting that it is the shortest intercontinental flight in the world. Tour operators will offer inclusive day trips to Tangier, Fez and Tetuan on Rock Air from £49.

■ MORE than 100 London taxi drivers have become guides for Black Taxi Tours of London. A two-hour tour taking in all the sights, stopping at the most interesting and with a commentary from drivers who really know London costs £60. The price goes up to £65 from April but as each taxi takes up to five people that works out at £13 a head.

■ BRITISH Airways is clamping down on the amount of baggage carried on to an aircraft. Tough new rules will come into force at the end of this month in an attempt to prevent exits being blocked, bags falling from overhead lockers and the inconvenience to passengers trying to get to their seat behind others with mountains of hand luggage. Details from BA on 0345 222111.

See Paris for £100

Paris is a realistic weekend option for people with slim wallets. *Le weekend*, partly thanks to the Chunnel, can be enjoyed for little more than £100 and if you can endure seven hours in a coach, it costs even less.

HOW TO GET THERE: Here is a selection of spring offers, subject to availability.

Campus Travel (0171-233 7892) arranges packages from £70 with accommodation from £21 per night. A Eurostar deal will whisk you from Waterloo to Paris for £49 return midweek or £69 weekends (students and under-26s only).

Timescape (0181-980 7244) offers coach trips throughout the year. For £79 you get two nights in a three-star hotel (B&B) plus transport.

Eurodrive (0181-324 4000) combines Eurostar with two nights in a city centre hotel, from £99 to £120.

Thomson Travel (0171-200 8703) charges £139 for one night's B&B plus Eurostar return. It also offers an £89 deal which ends in late March.

Sarastem The Travel People (0181-906 0966) offers flights to Paris and one night B&B for £119. A Eurostar package with one night's B&B costs £117.

Council Travel (0171-287 3337) gives you two nights at a central hotel (B&B), plus Eurostar return tickets, for £129 per head.

For £89 the **European Travel Centre** (0171-373 8058) offers coach travel, two nights in a B&B hotel, and a guided tour.

Treasures (0171-494 2292) offers Eurostar travel and two nights at a central Hotel for £119, or £99 midweek.

For £79 the **Paris Travel Service** (0171-233 7892) has two nights at a hotel plus coach transport. The faster alternative is Eurostar, with one night at a hotel for £99.

WHERE TO STAY: If you arrange your own trip, these are good tips for budget accommodation.

The **IYHF youth hostel** at 8 Boulevard Jules Ferry (4357 5560) from Fr110 a night.

The **Auberge de Jeunesse d'Artagnan** (4361 0875), 80 rue Vitruve, has 411 beds. Price Fr109 for dormitory accommodation & breakfast. **Café Couette** (4294 9200) organises B&B with 80 different hosts for Fr280-520 per night for a double room: **Mije** (4272 7209) owns three converted mansions in the Marais. From Fr118 a night with breakfast. **Residence Bastille** (4379 5386) charges Fr115 per person per night in dormitories.

WHERE TO EAT: Don't expect haute cuisine below Fr220. But if you avoid tourist traps, drink house wine and stick to set menus, you can get a good meal at a reasonable price. Recommended budget eateries include: **Bistro Mazarin**, 42 rue Mazarine, average meal Fr110.

Le Trumilou, 84 quai de l'Hotel de Ville, offers set menus at Fr65 or Fr80.

Les Temps des Cerises, 31 Rue de la Cerisaie, is an ancient bistro with a Fr50 lunch menu.

Au Rendez-vous des Chauffeurs, 11 Rue des Portes-Blanches has a Fr63 menu.

Paris Travel Service (01992 456220) has extended its meal voucher scheme to include the Flo Tradition brasseries, at £32 per person for an aperitif, starter, main course, dessert, wine and coffee.

THE SIGHTS: It's worth buying a Museum and Monument Card, which gives you free entry to 63 museums and monuments. Available at tourist offices, metro stations and large museums, Fr70 (one day), Fr140 (three days) or Fr200 (five days).

Eiffel Tower: by lift to 1st level Fr20, children Fr10, 2nd level Fr38/19, 3rd level Fr55/26. Free to under-4s. First and second levels Fr12 by stairs. **Arc de Triomphe**: Entry Fr32, Fr21 (18-25s), Fr10 (12-17s), free under-12s; **Sacre Coeur**, Montmartre: admission Fr15, Fr8 (6-25s). Small children free. **The Louvre**: Fr40 before 3pm, Fr20 after 3pm & Sun. **Musée D'Orsay**: admission Fr36. **Pompidou Centre**: entry free but up to Fr35 for cinema or special exhibitions.

EXCHANGE rate: £1=Fr8.98.

READING: *Europe by Train 1997*, by Katie Wood; *Cheap Sleeps in Paris*, by Sandra A. Gustafson; *Time Out Guide to Paris*.

JAMES PICKARD

Choose carefully and you can eat and drink cheaply

Ireland: A bewitching break in the gently rolling hills and serene lakes steeped in history and legend…

Peace in the air of Clare

American tourists to western Ireland know the drill: Shannon airport, medieval banquet (with wenches) at Bunratty Castle, see the Cliffs of Moher, play golf at Lahinch: so much for Clare — done that. Then they go their separate ways, never to know what they have missed by seeking highways and ignoring byways of this entrancing region.

Co Clare, locked in by the Shannon to east and south, faces westward to the sea, with Galway its northern neighbour. Two and a half hours by car from Dublin, in East Clare, a notice proclaims Mountshannon as winner of the 1981 Tidy Towns Competition. "A sort of evening-like town, very quiet, tree-lined with no big, gaudy signs or lettering", is how Edna O'Brien described her mother's birthplace above Lough Derg.

Lough Derg, a large bulge in the Shannon, is part of the river's navigation system; its harbour provides anchorage for holiday cruisers, and nearby are opportunities for game fishing (trout and salmon) and coarse fishing (pike, perch, rudd and bream). In the lake lies Holy Island, Inis Cealtra, where St Colum founded a monastery in the 6th century, but then "marauders mauled this holy ground". We learn this from local historian Gerard Madden, who will take you there by motor-boat: a pleasant trip down the rush-fringed River Graney into Scariff Bay.

Gerry, or rumours of his whereabouts, can usually be unearthed at the East Clare Heritage Centre, in a 10th-century church in Tuamgraney, near Mountshannon. At Tuamgraney, you can see the Brian Boru Oak, oldest of its species in Ireland.

Cottage industry has gathered fresh meaning in today's Ireland. Throughout the countryside, you find white and grey settlements of Irish holiday cottages, the usual pattern a cluster of traditional buildings on the edge of a village, providing seclusion and a marvellous way of getting to know rural Ireland.

Mountshannon Village Cottages are eight dwellings in pastel shades around a gravelled courtyard; ours had two storeys and slept six, in three bedrooms. An open hearth for peat fires, brass window-catches, tiled floors, exposed woodwork and stable-door entrance gave a pleasantly antique feeling, though the kitchen is modern.

We enjoyed shopping, the village has an excellent butcher and a small supermarket; we indulged ourselves in home cooking, unlike one American visitor, who inquired: "What time does the self-catering come round?" Bicycles can be hired, for gentle exploration of East Clare's meandering lanes.

West Clare is of different character. Its principal town, Ennis, is a fairly ordinary, busy place, with tight streets and a host of pubs, many offering traditional Irish music and beverages. There is a good 18-hole golf course, the 13th-century abbey has been restored, and the Old Ground Hotel is a comfortable, gracious establishment. These days, nostalgia colours our visits to Clare: every year for two decades, we stayed near the village of Corofin with dear friends, who showed us the subtleties of their region. They had chosen an ideal site for their home, looking down on the serene waters of Inchiquin, and across to the stratifications of the Burren. Today's visitors enjoy the same view from Corofin Lake Cottages.

I often think of the man I met early one morning in a country lane in Clare. I used to take a bicycle ride before my hosts had stirred and on this occasion I had a camera with me. As I rounded a corner, an ideal picture was before me: horse and cart outside a farm, the driver carefully ladling milk from churn into jug. As I focused the camera he turned and, spying me, whipped his horse furiously and sped off. Slowly it dawned that the poor fellow was stealing his morning milk and now, when most of Ireland still slept, he had been caught in the act.

Folklore and fact, legend and history, tend to become interwoven in Irish consciousness, and Clare is a good place to witness that process. Many in West Clare have tales about Maire Rua, "Red Mary", a colourful figure of Cromwellian times.

Go and see the restored Dysart O'Dea Castle, where Maire lived with her first husband, Daniel Neylon. Better still are the substantial remains, near Killinaboy, of Leamaneh Castle, once occupied by Maire and her second husband, Conor O'Brien.

Kilfenora, with its 12th-century high cross and Burren Centre, is worth a visit: while northwards from Leamaneh a road leads past megalithic tombs into the heart of the Burren, 100 square miles of limestone where, as Cromwell noted: "There is not enough wood to hang a man, not water enough to drown him, nor earth to bury him in."

Spring and autumn are our times for Clare: in spring, myriads of tiny flowers sprout in the cracks between the huge limestone pavings of the Burren; in autumn, shades of red and gold illuminate the trees above Corofin Lake Cottages. Early and late, the seasons impart variety and delight to Clare's landscape and waterscape.

Occasionally we stray north of the border from Clare; just off the main road from Ennis to Galway, you can visit Yeats's Thoor Ballylee and Coole Park, with its woodland walks. Past Kilcolgan, a sign indicates Moran's Oyster Cottage, which serves oysters, crab, mussels and smoked salmon in unpretentious surroundings. After feasting there, we have taken the leisurely coastal route back to Corofin, through Kinvara and Ballyvaghan, with sightings of the Aran Islands westwards.

Why do we return to this region of Ireland, year after year? For memories for renewal of friendships, for tranquillity: the utter quiet of a Clare morning challenges description. Nobody is astir early, and even birds seem muted at sunrise. The glassy waters of Lough Atedaun, hardly stirred by lazily gliding swans, convey a peace which very nearly passes all understanding; but then saints have breathed on this green and pleasant land.

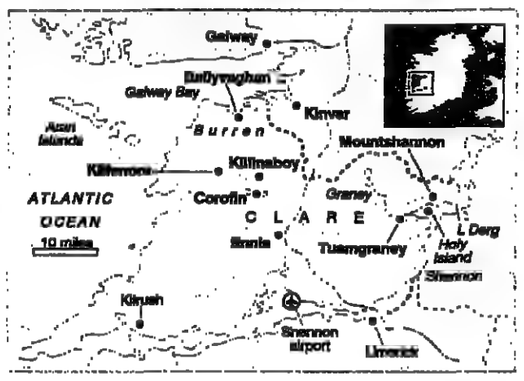
I am of Ireland,
and the Holy Land of Ireland
And time runs on . . .

Time does run on: it is 36 years since first I stood on Irish soil, yet, steeped in the atmosphere of this bewitching land, our hearts have not grown old. I can wish visitors to Ireland no richer gift than to be as blessed in good fellowship as we were: and may they catch sight of the sun now and then.

PETER ORR

SLIDE FILE

Dongory Castle at Kinvara in County Clare has a timeless appeal, which somehow matches the tranquil splendour of this part of Ireland



TRAVEL TIPS

■ THE three-star Westlodge Hotel in Bantry, West Cork (00 353 27 50360) has 15 per cent off weekend rates during the Bantry Mussel Fair, May 8-11. *Alex Wijeratne writes.* Double rooms are £90 per person shared, including two Irish breakfasts and a dinner. Bantry Bay mussels are free in all bars, restaurants and hotels throughout the event.

■ IRISH Ferries (0990 171717) is reducing rates by half from March 19 between Pembroke-Rosslare, with one-way fares for a car and five passengers down from £99 to £49. Available until May 21. The same concession is reduced from £109 to £69 between May 26 and July.

■ STENA LINE (0990 707070) has day trips to "Ballykissangel" in Co Wicklow (in reality, Avoca) from £24 per person. Crossing via Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire, including coach to Avoca and shopping in Dublin.

■ BARGAIN stays at 1,700 farmhouses and guest houses are available through "Welcome Home Packages" from Gerry Feeney Travel (0181-514 5141). The price for two people is £298 until May 24, which includes six nights' B&B plus ferry crossings with car from Holyhead to Dublin.

■ AER LINGUS (0645 737747) has two-for-one Companion Fares for £99 return from Stansted to Dublin until end of June. Passengers must travel together and stay either two nights or include a Saturday night in Ireland. Same fare from Heathrow to Dublin is £119 until May 22.

■ DUBLIN'S five-star Berkley Court Hotel (00 353 16 687638) has 40 per cent discounts at £137 per person sharing for two nights, including breakfast and one dinner, until end of April.

COUNTY CLARE FACT FILE

■ Stena Line's brochure, *Holiday Ireland*, offers a wide choice of self-catering cottages: Ballyvaughan, Bellharbour, Corofin, Kilkee, Killaloe, Lahinch, Mountshannon, Quilty, Spanish Point, Whitegate. Most take six, and cost, according to season and location, from £300 to £859 for one week, £555 to £1,498 for two weeks. Prices per cottage, not per person, including return Stena Line crossing for car and two adults; additional adults £10 each, children under 16 free. Holiday Ireland (0990 747474) also has details of cruising holidays on the Shannon. Similar packages from Irish Ferries (0990 170000).

■ Getting there: Fishguard-Rosslare, Holyhead-Dun Laoghaire, Stranraer-Belfast by Stena Line conventional ferries and fast catamarans (0990 707070). Holyhead-Dublin, Pembroke-Rosslare by Irish Ferries (0990 171717). Cairnryan-Larne by P&O European Ferries (0990 980980).

■ Hotels: Dromoland Castle (for a taste of high living), Newmarket-on-Fergus. Double (room only) IR£160-204, suites IR£330 (00 353 61 368144); Old Ground Hotel, O'Connell Street, Ennis, which reopens on April 1 following renovations. Single from IR£59, double/twin from IR£108 (00 353 65 28112). Gregan's Castle, Ballyvaughan (00 353 65 77005), single rooms IR£78-£90, double/twin IR£96-£120.

■ Eating out: Moran's Oyster Bar, The Weir Kilcolgan (00 353 91 796113).

■ Reading: *The Festival of Lughnasa* by Maire MacNeill (Comhairle Bhealoideas Eireann, University College, Dublin); *Ireland — A History* by Robert Kee (Weidenfeld & Nicolson). Guidebooks and maps can be found easily in bookshops and Heritage Centres throughout Clare.

هكذا من الأصل

...or Kinsale, one of Ireland's oldest towns and also its gourmet capital; plus a literary pub tour in Dublin

A Corking time was had by all

It rained for much of the time when Europe's officials turned up to inspect Kinsale, one of the oldest towns in Ireland. They were there to discover what wild Irish cheek had egged on this once derelict town in Co Cork to enter for the European Prize for Tourism and the Environment — competing against 269 honey pots in 17 countries.

Despite the soft mornings which drenched the visiting inspectorate — and to the surprise of everybody except the locals — Kinsale won. Beat places like Austria's Weissensee lake district, the Greek islands, the Cévennes national park in France and the English Peak District.

Time was when Kinsale was a booming port and home to 10,000 souls. But famine, emigration and the closure of its British garrison cut the population to 1,800 by the 1960s. The locals decided it was time to stop their town disappearing off the map. They tempted an international army of tourists to march on its stomach — to a town that earned its royal charter in 1333 and let six centuries slide by without cooking a decent meal.

Opera singer Heidli MacNeice, widow of Irish poet Louis, began the process by opening the Spinnaker — dedicated to treating the glorious local seafood with reverence. (It is not all that long ago that Ireland's fishermen threw prawns back into the sea, despising them as "sea spiders". Mussels were considered "famine food".)

Peter Barry moved in next. Now a sprightly sixty-something, he has some official title such as Chief of Tourism, but the locals call him King of Kinsale. He operates from a cottage bearing this notice: "This is the back door. The front door is at the back."

He opened the Man Friday restaurant in 1962 (it is still there) and told Mrs MacNeice: "I'll do meat. Anybody asks for fish — I'll send them to you." Mr Barry did not know he was giving birth to a concept which was to spawn the Kinsale Good Food Circle, turn the town into the gourmet capital of Ireland and help it become top dog in Europe.

International chefs sniffed the kitchens of Kinsale and moved in. Now their circle of restaurants are committed to helping each other — and the town. You want oyster sausages? Thai delicacies? Black pudding poached in pink champagne? Brian Cronin at the Blue Haven does not do them — but he knows a man who does and he will guide you to a rival restaurant.

Ask for salmon straight from the sea, hot-smoked while you wait, and he will guide you to one of his own tables. This dish, smoked over oak chippings with a saffron and shrimp sauce, was chosen by *Elle* magazine as one of the top ten "dream meals of the world".

The town packs in serious gourmandisers for a foodie spectacular in October: champagne brunches, wine tastings, music, dancing, Irish folk music, story telling. Bring your own Alka Seltzer.

Kinsale is 13 miles from Cork airport through gentle farmland and meandering estuary coastline where one tiny development of new pastel-washed houses overlooking the harbour scars the western hillside like a razor slash. One local confessed: "They look like a set of false teeth. They are so awful that I bought one. When I'm in there none of my views are ruined."

There are some 60 pubs, restaurants, bars and hotels in and around Kinsale (pop. 2,500), many of them magnificent. The *Bridgestone Book of Best Places to Stay* says of the Old Prestbytery B&B: "As near as dammit perfect." One of the pubs is called the Greyhound. Hospitality there borders on the lethal, especially if you bump into Ted Murphy, part-time historian and full-time raconteur.

You are about to empty your glass and go home when Mr Murphy says: "Do you know the most romantic history that's never been told?" Suddenly it is not time to go home and he is romancing the story of how the Irish conquered the world of wine. It starts 1,400 years ago with St Patrick knowing a good drop when he came across one and continues with the Irish fleeing English persecution in the 17th century, settling in vineyards from France to Chile and still dominating the trade. Ted Murphy and Peter Barry and Brian Cronin are among the driving forces behind Kinsale's International Museum of Wine — to be opened on April 11 in the immaculately restored Desmond Castle.

What clinched the Euro prize was how the whole community battled to turn the old place into a tourist attraction without damaging its heritage. This was not a prize for a resort — more for a place where people are proud to live. Mark Russell, chef at the White House, said: "We want visitors feel they have been in a happy town, where people work together. I have cooked around the world and never seen anything like it. Everywhere else everyone is out for themselves. Here part of our life is devoted to making this a better place."

Peter Jordan, at the Seasons restaurant, said of the gourmet festival: "It's a fun weekend where people enjoy themselves with good wine, good food, good craic. An orchestra at one end of the town and a jazz festival at the other."

Walk along Main Street (the narrowest one in town) and aim for Denis Quay. The 1890 houses on your right once stood smack on the waterfront overlooking the hundreds of fishing boats which then brought mackerel and herring to the port. But things have not changed all that much. In October 1703, a Captain Francis Rogers of London blew in on a storm and found "very good French claret in the taverns and we did not a little indulge ourselves". Kinsale has gone full circle.

JACK CROSSLEY

Next week: Northern Ireland

CORK FACT FILE

■ The Atlantic Manor Hotel (00 353 21 778215) has Easter weekend specials for £99 per person sharing a double room. Includes three nights' B&B and two dinners. The Atlantic's Manor Restaurant opens on St Patrick's Day. Nine miles from Kinsale, 25 minutes from Cork, and all rooms overlook Garretstown beach. The three-star Blue Haven Hotel (00 353 21 772209) in Kinsale has two-day special rates at £150 per person from April 1. Includes B&B, double room with en suite bathroom, and a dinner. Five minutes from the National Wine Musuem.

■ Aer Lingus (0645 737747) has Saver Fares from Heathrow to Cork for £79 return until June 30. Passengers must stay Saturday night. Ryanair (0541 569569) has flights from Stansted to Cork from £69 return until mid-July. British Airways (0345 222111) has return flights from Gatwick to Cork on March 20-24 from £133-£352.

WORLD PICTURES

Fishermen in Kinsale, where the local seafood is treated with reverence by the town's restaurants

Squiffy on the Liffey

Arranging a weekend in Dublin is easy. You take the tube to Heathrow, or any other main UK airport, hop on the Aer Lingus flight, and an hour and a half later you are in Dublin, with a pint of Liffey Water at your elbow — a relaxing start to a weekend in a city where the people are so laid-back they are practically horizontal.

There is always something new going on in Dublin and the old haunts don't change much so after a couple of visits — and this was my eighth — it starts to feel like home.

We began at the Westbury Hotel, in the old heart of the city, and checked up on the latest attractions with Brendan Enright, hotel concierge and Dublin enthusiast. He recommended a stroll to the Temple Bar area, the student quarter, full of bars and boutiques and thronged with youngsters.

We had a look at that and very entertaining it was and stopped by the bronze statue of *Sweet Molly Malone* and her herring barrow — referred to locally as The Tart with the Cart — and got an early start on the shopping. By then it was time for the early evening Literary Pub Tour, a kind of pub-crawl with culture led by resting actors. The tour consists of dropping into marvellous pubs in little-known corners of the city for a pint of the right stuff and a snatch of verse or a scene from a play. We had Guinness and Wilde, Sean O'Casey and a Black Bush, and a bit of Behan, but I forget what I had with that.

Then we had a bit of singing and it was all very jolly. The tour lasts a couple of hours, and was the perfect aperitif before an extremely good dinner in the Russell Restaurant.

The Saturday morning tradition is breakfast at Bewley's in Grafton Street, one of the great old-fashioned tea shops of Dublin, where the waitresses wear lace caps and the portions are enormous. The rest of the day was spent wandering about in the revamped and glitzy Brown Thomas department store.

Wandering is the best way to take in the sights. Some things ought to be seen, or seen again, like the 9th century *Book of Kells* in the University Library, or St Stephen's Green and the Georgian houses for which Dublin is justly famous. We had lunch in the bar at the Shelbourne Hotel and spent the afternoon strolling up Grafton and O'Connell Street, skipping out of the rain for a look at the Dublin Writers Museum and the splendid art in the National Gallery of Ireland.

That took up all the time until dark and so to dinner at The Side Door, Dublin's newest restaurant. It is the perfect place for dinner, after a snifter or two in the Horseshoe Bar next door — Brendan Behan was carried home from there many a time.

After dinner walk into any pub, like O'Donoghue's or Molly Malone's Tavern and in seconds you will be deep in conversation with someone. The music is infectious, the din considerable and neither of you know what you are talking about, but that hardly matters because you're having such a good time.

ROBIN NEILLANDS

● *The author was a guest of Aer Lingus, the Westbury Hotel and the Irish Tourist Board.*

A busker in Dublin

DUBLIN FACT FILE

■ Aer Lingus (0181-899 4747) operates daily flights to Dublin from all over the UK. Return fares from Heathrow to Dublin from £69. Aer Lingus Holidays (0181-569 4001) offers weekend breaks to many parts of Ireland.
■ The Westbury Hotel, Grafton St, Dublin (00 353 16 791122) has double rooms from Ir£145, special weekend rate.
■ Further information from the Irish Tourist Board (Bord Failte), 150 New Bond Street, London W1V 0AQ (0171-518 0800).
■ The Literary Pub Tour (£6) begins nightly from The Duke Pub, Duke St, at 7.30pm.

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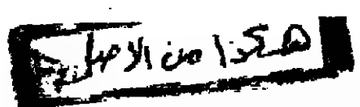


CHESS

by Raymond Keene

IN THE early part of this century, a great debate raged as to the correct defence against the Queen's Gambit. The German grandmaster and teacher Dr Siegbert Tarrasch lobbied fiercely for the defence which bears his name, namely 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 c5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Nf3 Nc6.

Later, in n the Capablanca-Alekhine World Championship of 1927, the Orthodox Defence to the Queen's Gambit — 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 — was tested almost to extinction. The verdict was, and tends to remain, that Black's prospects are solid, but not exciting. Then in the 1930s, the Slav Defence, based on 2 . . . c6, gained in popularity, especially as a result of games between the world champions Alekhine and Euwe.

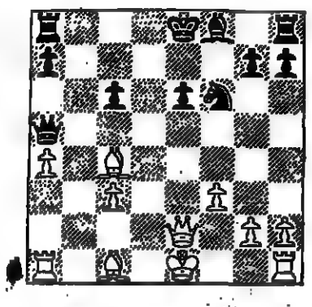
Dr Tarrasch had earlier dismissed the Slav, since the pawn on c6 deprives Black's queen's knight of its best square. Nevertheless, the Slav, as a new book by former British champion Matthew Sadler demonstrates, continues to show great vitality. In the following two games from the book we see Black losing, but mainly because the chance to exchange queens, respectively on moves 13 and 12 in the two games is passed over by the black players.

White: Van der Sterren
Black: Petursson
San Bernardino Open, 1992

1	d4	d5	2	c4	c6
3	Nc3	Nf6	4	Nf3	dxc4
5	a4	Bf5	6	Ne5	e6
7	f3	c5	8	e4	cxd4
9	exf5	Ne6	10	Nxc6	bxc6
11	fxe6	fxe6	12	Bxc4	dxc3
13	bxc3				

This is a move-order that should be met by 13 . . . Qxd1+ 14 Kxd1 Kd7.

13 . . . Qa5? 14 Qe2!!



This rook sacrifice is a magnificent concept!

14 . . .		Qxc3+	15	Kf1	Qxa1
16 Qxe6+		Kd8			

16 . . . Be7 loses to 17 Qxc6+ Kf8 18 Qxa8 Ne8 19 Ke2 Qxa4 20 Qd5 Nd6 21 Bd3 with a crushing attack.

17 Ke2!! This quiet move, allowing the rook to join in the attack, justifies White's brilliant idea.

17 . . .		Qxa4	18	Rd1+	Qxd1+
19 Kxd1		Bc5	20	Qf7	Re8
21 Qxg7		Nd7	22	Bf7	Rf8
23 Be6		Nf6	24	Qb7	Re8
25 Qxa8+		Kc7	26	Bf4+	

Black resigns.

White: Rogozenko; Black: Bets
Moldovan Championship, 1994

1	d4	d5	2	c4	c6
3	Nc3	e5	4	dxe5	d4
5	Ne4	Qa5+	6	Bd2	Qxe5
7	Ng3	Nf6	8	Nf3	Qd6
9	Qc2	Be7	10	0-0-0	0-0
11	e3	dxe3	12	fxe3	

This move, the key to White's play was introduced by Garry Kasparov in his game against Nikolic in the 1992 Manila Olympiad. That game continued 12 . . . Qc7 13 Bc3 Bg4 14 Bd3 Nbd7 15 Bf5 and White went on to win.

12 . . . Na6 Also possible is 12 . . . Rd8, preventing 13 Bc3 since, in that case, 13 . . . Qxd1+ 14 Qxd1 Rxd1+ 15 Kxd1 exchanges queens, eliminating White's attacking possibilities.

13 Bc3 Qc7 Since this turns out badly, Black must consider 13 . . . Qe6, keeping the queen close to the kingside to help with defence, while threatening . . . Nb4 and . . . Ng4 as well as . . . Qxe3+.

14 a3! Preventing 14 . . . Nb4, activating the knight.

14 . . .		Ng4!?	15	Re1	Bf8
16 h3!		Bxc3	17	hxg4	

Obviously 17 . . . Bxe1 loses to 18 Qxh7+ mate.

17 . . .		h6	18	Qxc3	Qxg3
19 g5!		hxg5	20	Bd3	Rd8
21 Rh7		f6	22	Reh1	Qc7
23 Nxg5		Kf8	24	c5!	Bg4
25 Qxf6+!					

Black resigns. 25 . . . gxf6 26 Rh8+ Ke7 27 Rlh7+ is mate.

The Slav Defence (£14.99) by grandmaster Matthew Sadler, published by the Chess Press, is available from Cadogan Books, 27-29 Berwick Street, London W1V 3RF (tel: 0171 287 6555)

WINNING MOVE

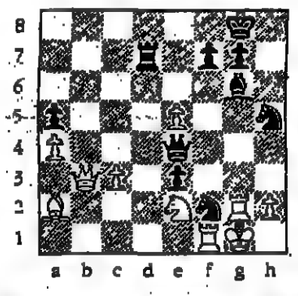
By Raymond Keene

Black to play. This position is from the game Hjartarson - Georgadze, Tilburg 1993. Although White is nominally ahead on material (rook for knight), the activity of Black's pieces renders this irrelevant. How did Black continue?

Send your answer on a postcard to *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society, which includes a free invitation to the annual dinner at Simpson's-in-the-Strand. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Last week's solution: 1 ... Rh1+

Last week's winner: S. Foale of Marlow, Buckinghamshire



PUNCHLINE

READERS are invited to write an amusing caption for the cartoon (right), from *The Strand Magazine* (reproduced from Westminster Libraries, Sherlock Holmes Collection, Marylebone Library).

The cartoon will be printed again next week with a caption from those submitted.

Send caption suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to: Strand Caption 43, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The Editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, March 19.

IT WAS A PINT BOTTLE

"But I assure you this *is* the dress the Spice Girl wore"

The winning caption for last week's cartoon (above) was submitted by A.Gray of Kingston, Surrey

WORD WATCHING

By Philip Howard

HEGIRA

a. A flight
b. An upper storey
c. A prostitute

PHALANX

a. A spotted wild cat
b. A pottery jar
c. A scrum

CAMILLA

a. A fragrant herb
b. A sprinter
c. A type of lace

BELTANE

a. A sword-belt
b. The waning moon
c. May Day

Answers on page 21

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

MANY countries promote Junior Bridge. The hand I describe today occurred at an international junior training camp in Miami last year. It is not easy to reach the excellent grand slam, though several pairs managed it with that potent mixture, science, Blackwood and exuberance. The best line involves taking your chances in the right order, a technique sometimes called "echeloning" the play.

Dealer North — North-South game

North: ♠84 ♥KQ643 ♦Q743 ♣AQ
West: ♠832 ♥J9872 ♦6 ♣10753
East: ♠Q975 ♥105 ♦1092 ♣KJ64
South: ♠AKJ10 ♥A ♦AKJ88 ♣982

Contract: Seven Diamonds by South
Lead: six of diamonds

A club lead would reduce your chances and a spade makes the *hand trivial, but imagine that you* receive the juniors' favourite lead, a trump. You play low from dummy, and when East follows you can count twelve sure tricks — five trumps in hand, three top hearts, two spades and a ruff, and the ace of clubs. If trumps are 2-2 you will able to get a second spade ruff, so you play a second high trump from hand.

When West throws a club you play for your second chance, a 4-3 heart split: cash the ace of hearts, cross to the queen of diamonds drawing East's remaining trump, and play the top hearts throwing away clubs. If hearts are 4-3 you can ruff out the suit, but West turns up with five.

Next you try ace king and a third spade, ruffing in dummy. Without looking too deeply into the hand your general idea is that if the *queen of spades doesn't drop* you will take the club finesse. However after the spade ruff, you ruff a heart back to hand, leaving this position:

North: ♠- ♥3 ♦- ♣AQ
West: ♠- ♥J ♦- ♣107
East: ♠Q ♥- ♦- ♣KJ
South: ♠J ♥- ♦5 ♣9

You lead your last trump. West throws a club, you throw dummy's heart and East throws the jack of clubs. Being idle, you haven't taken much notice of the discards except to observe that West kept his winning heart and the queen of spades hasn't appeared.

When you play a club at trick twelve and West follows low, you know his last card is a heart so there is no point in finessing. So you put up the ace of clubs. The king falls — it turns out that East has been squeezed in the black suits.

This year's camp will be in Italy, after the world Junior Pairs. Provisional dates are July 11-22.

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott

THE Manchester Ship Canal is 36 miles long, the chalk figure at Uffington is of a horse, Conwy Castle was built by Edward I, Loughborough is famed for the manufacture of bells and at least 30 per cent of the world's ships were built in the North East during the 1930s.

If you know all this then you'll excel in the quiz section of **The Ordnance Survey Interactive Atlas of Great Britain.** The multiple-answer quiz turns up a hotchpotch of questions for each of the ten regions in the country. Players must correctly answer three questions *in one region to move on to* the next until the entire country has been covered. And it's set against the clock — to succeed you'll need to come up with 30 correct answers within five minutes.

The questions comprehensively cover all British bases but the only sound-effects are disappointing — barely audible when a few bells, whistles or jingles would have injected some much-needed pace into the challenge. Finding all 30 answers rewards users with a simple certificate.

Intended to open up the country for desktop exploration and scrutiny, The Ordnance Survey Interactive Atlas of Great Britain is one of the latest additions to the Attica Knowledge series. The part-reference, mostly-educational title has a clunky feel with large, uncluttered displays and a no-frills approach. The familiar Ordnance Survey maps can be endlessly panned and zoomed, and viewed at scales of either one inch to ten miles or one inch to four miles.

Roughly 200 landmarks and landscapes are illustrated in colour slides which can be expanded to full-screen *size. A clutch of quick video* reports, which seem to have been selected at random, can also be viewed. Pinpoint compass control means wherever you move the mouse on the map a display box shows the latitude and longitude of that position.

The Windows CD-Rom also features seven interactive lessons to improve map-reading skills and additional databases offering political, population, climate and physical information in maps, graphs and pie-charts for both Britain and Europe as a whole. As well as the quiz certificates, most of the contents, including maps, can be printed. Ordnance Survey maps also form the basis of the exemplary **Personal Navigator** titles for Windows 95 from Softwair Limited, perfect for anyone who spends a lot of time on the road.

Personal Navigator is excellent for anyone who spends time on the road

There are several CD-Rom route-planners and hotel guides around, such as Microsoft's **AutoRoute** and the AA's **Hotel & Restaurant Guide**, but none is more complete than Personal Navigator.

As well as being an exemplary route planner, the title has several other tricks up its sleeve including a Royal Mail postcode database for pin-point accuracy and plug-in GPS (Global Positioning System) receiver abilities to give you, your laptop and car precise tracking down here on earth by at least eight orbiting satellites simultaneously.

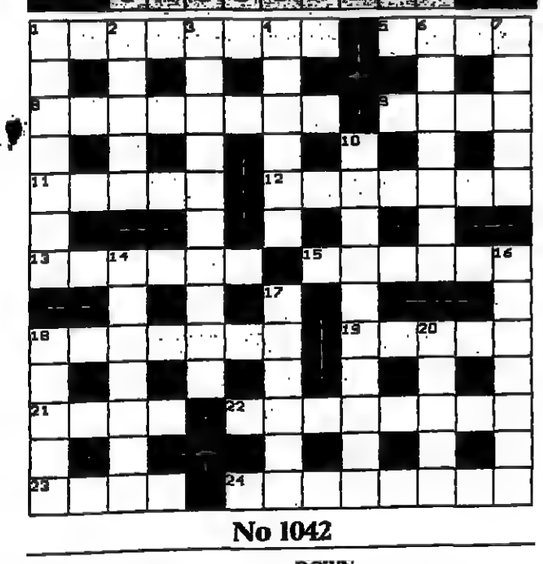
The basic Personal Navigator title takes Ordnance Survey's *Travelmaster maps*, covering 140,000 miles of roads, then adds umpteen layers with postcodes (1.6 million), a definitive gazetteer (220,000 places) taken from the Ordnance Survey Landranger maps, topographical information plus places to fill up on food, culture and fuel.

The Good Pub Guide locates 1,300 recommendations and **The Good Weekend Guide** picks out 5,000 places to visit. All maps, with or without overlapping route options, can be printed. Routes can be customised and quickly amended to avoid road-closures and hold-ups. Up to 30 stopovers can be incorporated in journey planning along with other preferences, such as road types and travel speeds. Time and cost estimates are quickly calculated. You can also build up your own custom database of locations and places of interest with user definable entries cross-referenced to map markers.

Personal Navigator Professional adds three Egon Ronay guides to the database options, with more than 4,000 hotel and restaurant selections. This version also accommodates the satellite navigation wizardry, for which you *need a plug-in GPS receiver.*

With this compact device, the maps become interactive and your progress around the country is plotted by a constantly updated dot on the screen. The only drawback is that it doesn't come cheap. The basic title costs £99, while Personal Navigator Professional is £149. GPS receivers start at £199. Add-on street-level mapping encompassing everywhere within the M25 will also be available soon, for £179. This week's Top Tip, winning a Microsoft title, comes from K. Malone of Cranbrook, Kent: "Park on the grass — and free up more of your hard drive."

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1042

ACROSS

1 Little lab vessel (4,4)
5 Discover (4)
8 Party decorations: swells up (8)
9 Fight: naut. pole (4)
11 Usurping mil. clique (5)
12 Royal household officer (7)
13 Ploy (6)
15 Inelegant helping (of food) (6)
18 Word of identical meaning (7)
19 More than adequate (5)
21 Ceremony (4)
22 Ingenious contrivance (8)
23 Friendly; close to answer (4)
24 Large celebration (8)

DOWN

1 Man-with-hat-shaped mug (4,3)
2 Beauty parlour: art exhibition room (5)
3 Rich/poor gulf *(Disraeli)* (3,7)
4 *Golf hazard: underground* shelter (6)
6 Put at risk (7)
7 Eliz. Bennet's match *(J. Austen)* (5)
10 Dangerously exposed (3,2,1,4)
14 Enormous; deformed thing (7)
16 Go ahead of (7)
17 Mafia code of secrecy (6)
18 Dry stalks; their colour (5)
20 Before; senior monk (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 1041

ACROSS: 1 Bowl 3 Grapple 8 Compost 9 Datum 10 Milan 11 Entreat 13 Dark horse 17 Cynical 19 Gamma 20 After 22 Hominid 23 Rigging 24 Pyre

DOWN: 1 Become 2 Wimbledon 3 Go the whole hog 4 Audit 5 Pet 6 Enmity 7 Joiner 12 Even money 14 Régime 15 Eclair 16 Handle 18 Corgi 21 Tug

THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

No 3401: Enigma Variation by Swan

HALF the across answers (1 to 17 and 25 to 34) are encoded. The code is on the outside of a wheel driven by a keyboard. The wheel moves forward one position when 'A' is struck, two when 'B' is struck and so on. When the wheeel stops turning, the letter to be entered appears in a window. At the start of the puzzle, 'E' is in the window. When the encoding of 1-ac is completed, the letter then in the window is the starting position for the encoding of 6-ac and so on.

It is possible for a letter to be encoded but remain unchanged. The unchecked encoded letters could be arranged to create the unlikely character 'DR X MFH'. The order of the letters on the wheel, starting with 'E', should be written beneath the grid.

ACROSS

1 Diet a bit of madness for a small man, especially a soldier (6)
6 Sleep is one asset to be nursed (6)
11 Before start of television somewhat thin in live coverage (7)
14 *Lord who has to go to Oval possibly for game (4)*
15 Old hedge not half all right for bird (4)
16 Person to yell regularly for hypothetical substance (6)
17 Composer to avoid (5)
18 Stuffed note in middle of song (5)
19 Covered with water grass enclosure gets extremely dirty (5)
20 Masseur makes joint start to rotate within a day (7)
22 Wrinkly flower absorbs lecturer (5)
25 Aphrodisiac I nibble has pips in it (5)
28 A.Border, for example, to settle back behind defensive set-up (7)
31 Jack harms timber carriers (5)
34 Wanting to run away though genuine (5)
35 Try to duck lacking courage (5)
36 I'm a clot and a half-baked ox! (6)
38 Old roll of parchment breaks when stored aboard ship (4)
39 Touchy about famous bowman (4)
40 Discouraged poet, cut by university, died (7)
41 Rails against English being thin on the ground (6)
42 Once used to sanction opponents to hit the sack (6)

DOWN

1 Hold-up is welcome to detective (6)
2 Vibrating in capacity of defunct queen bee (7)
3 *Was disturbed about cross old soldier (4)*
4 Nothing against male in local shoot with skirt according to Old Bill (6)
5 Hazard to reject in Sydney (4)
7 Jazzy velour window curtain (6)
8 Prayer cows Scottish king with independent constituents (5)
9 With loved one the old duke formerly exulted (5)
10 Short biblical book your interpretation of a fine yarn? (6)
11 Attempt of Kiwi to get round one with a quaint vault (6)
12 *Separate from star, needing a drink (6)*
13 Daughter under roof of heartless relative is without guidance (5)
21 You could be sick of this Ecstasy metaphor, local as it was (6)
23 Planned not to have money distributed (6)
24 Bird not totally bad engaged in competition (7)
25 Clobber dumped on step is upholstery material (5)
26 Production unit in unproductive north (5)
27 Rector seen breaking top American's wrist (6)
29 A wife goes to a disreputable house to stir (6)
30 Vicariously writes play (6)
32 *Once round edge of tablecloth could be butter (5)*
33 Sound out tailor to make long robe (5)
36 Share rise at last is pleasing (4)
37 After lunch in Australia take in eggs which are over (4)

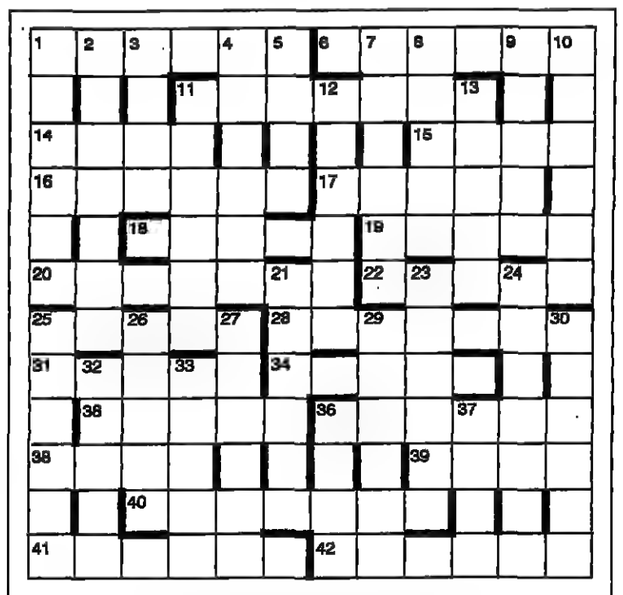
E	O	E	O	P	A	R	A	L	L	E	L	O	G	R
R	I	D	G	E	N	E	R	E	I	D	O	B	U	L
I	L	G	I	G	O	Y	S	T	E	R	S	H	E	L
S	C	E	N	E	D	E	T	H	A	L	S	A	S	S
T	S	H	U	R	I	D	Y	E	B	V	E	S	T	P
I	T	A	L	I	O	T	L	A	E	R	S	D	S	E
C	O	M	M	U	T	E	E	N	D	P	E	A	T	R
A	M	M	I	C	A	L	■	D	I	S	P	R	O	P
L	P	E	N	S	T	E	C	A	M	I	A	B	L	E
L	S	R	B	E	R	T	H	H	A	L	C	Y	O	N
Y	D	R	O	W	I	R	A	S	M	M	T	A	N	D
L	E	A	D	U	S	U	R	P	S	H	A	N	S	I
L	F	P	O	R	T	R	A	I	T	O	L	D	S	C
E	E	K	N	S	A	I	C	K	S	S	A	J	O	U
O	R	T	I	O	N	A	T	E	L	Y	A	O	U	L

Solution to No 3398: All Square by Dimitry

The four pieces of the grid can be assembled around a 7x7 square to form a skew, jagged-edge "square". The four long entries were hinted at in the preamble viz. CHARACTERISTICALLY (distinctively), PERPENDICULAR STYLE (laid out vertically), DISPROPORTIONATELY (in an overlong manner) and PARALLELOGRAMMICAL (with opposite sides aligned). Three-letter words were defined in the order GIG, RAP, TEC, TEL, HAS, OLD, DAH, END.

The winner is: A. King of Witney, Oxfordshire.

The five runners-up are: G. Meridith and A. Reid of Wood Green, London; N. Maxwell of Manchester; F. Blanchard of Bournemouth, Dorset; R. Boot of Ealing, London; and R. Baxter of London.



LISTENER CROSSWORD No 3401
in association with Waterstone's

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Get fit while the garage fixes your car

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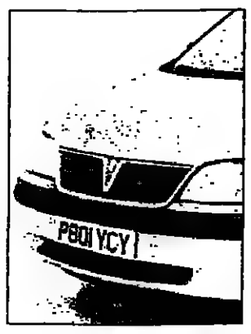
THE TIMES

CAR 97

Vauxhall launches contender for the space race

Page 3



SATURDAY MARCH 15 1997

Computer-controlled robots mean goodbye to the disgusting multistorey. **Jonathan Prynn** reports

The building will park your car

Imagine never again having to tackle the assault course that is parking your car in a multistorey: no more manic hunts for that last space on the fourth floor, never again the fumble for change you know you do not have, the scrapping of graffiti-scarred lifts that work only as public lavatories.

And no "Mr Jobsworth", shouting: "You can't park there" seconds after you have completed one of the world's most difficult manoeuvres — putting a 12ft car into a 12ft 2in slot.

Instead, computerised, high-tech bliss, the parking carefully taken care of by robots so there is not even the hint of an accidental ding or lost indicator light when you miscalculate the distance between the bumper and the wall. And it's coming to a city centre near you soon.

Work on Britain's first fully-automated, computer operated car park is due to start in Edinburgh in October with an opening date next summer. Many more are expected to follow.

If the idea takes off, the traditional multistorey, with its dank, foul-smelling recesses and exhaust-filled atmosphere, may soon be consigned to the same dustbin of history as the high-rise tower block.

At the Edinburgh car park, part of a £40 million conference centre, motorists will simply drive into an enclosed bay, lock their cars and walk away with their tickets. The computer and "robot" trolleys will do the rest.

Behind the scenes, as the doors to the bay close, the electronically closed trolleys obediently go about their business. Under command from the central computer, they pick up the car, carry it to the lift, then leave it in the nearest available "space" in a rack.

When the driver returns and feeds the ticket back into the computer, the robots are programmed to pick up the car again, take it to the lift and return it to the pick-up bay. Some 45 seconds or so after the car arrives at the car park, the bay outer doors will open, hopefully to reveal the vehicle ready to be driven off.

That, at least, is the theory. Manufacturers claim that their system is safer, greener, more secure than the traditional multistorey and takes up around 30 per cent less room.

Computer sensors detect any intruders entering the car park, which is patrolled by closed circuit television, and automatically locks all external doors. The computer will also refuse to park any cars from which they can detect movement, making it very difficult to "stow away" inside a vehicle being parked. The pick-up point is a well-lit and comfortable waiting room, in contrast to the gloomy and frightening ambience of underground car parks beloved of cop show and thriller film directors.

According to Brian Dunlop, managing director of Sky Parks, the company building the Edinburgh car park, vehicles will be returned to their driver within 30 to 45 seconds of entering the ticket into the slot. At peak time it can process up to 100 cars an hour, making the maximum wait no more than three minutes, he claims.

Although they are about 20 per cent more expensive to build, advocates of automated car parks claim that they work out cheaper in the long run because of lower staff costs. Many of those built abroad are completely unmanned, although continuously monitored from a central CCTV centre covering a number of car parks.

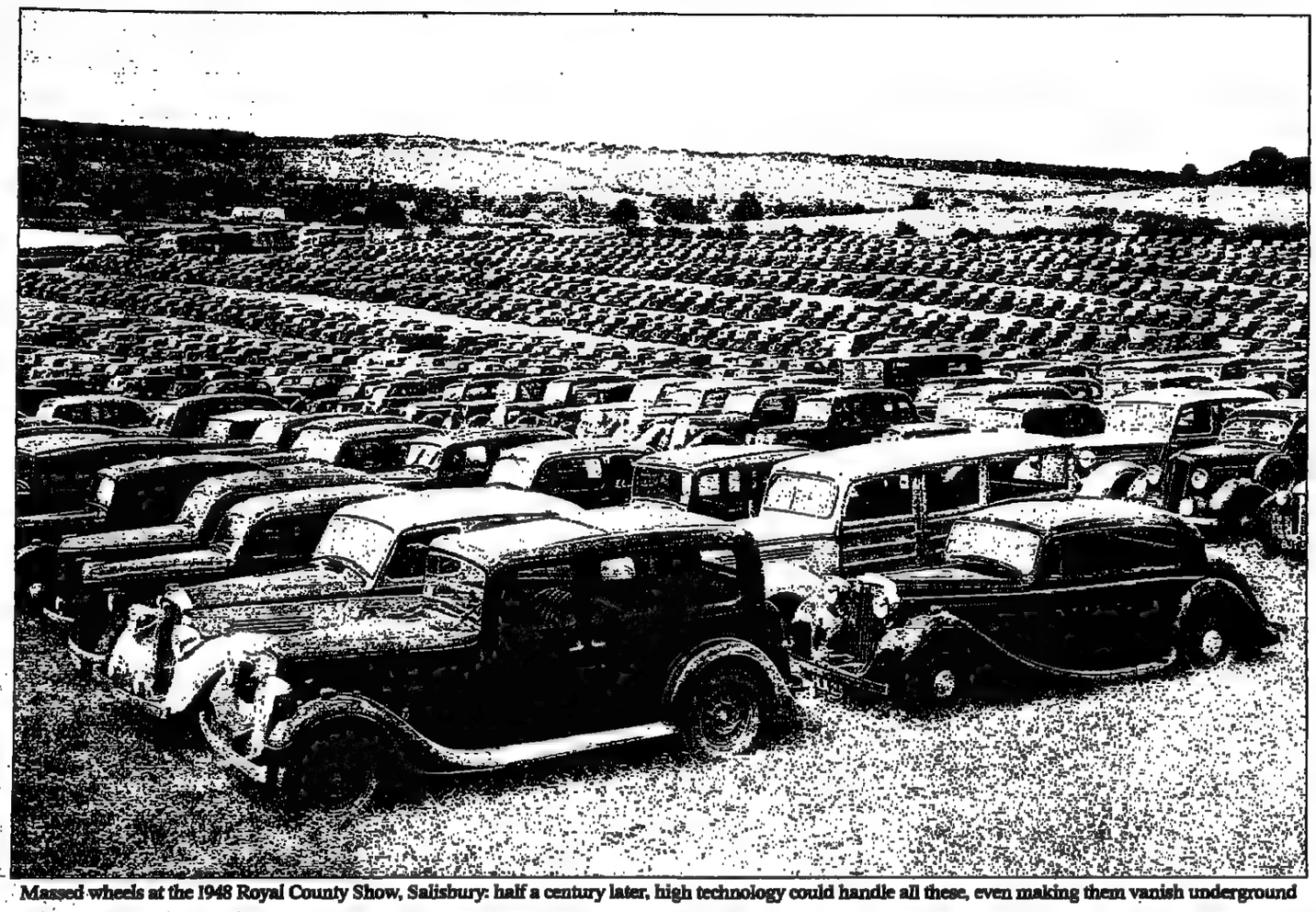
Two main competing systems are now on the market. The above ground version is little more than a gigantic Meccano frame with slots for the cars to be stored in. Because there is no need for ventilation or light, the frame can be clad in materials blending in with the surrounding buildings. According to Dunlop, car parks of the future could be made to look like Georgian mansions or Norman castles if desired.

The main alternative is a below ground system pioneered by the Fiat subsidiary, Trevi. This parks cars in a cylindrical subterranean "honeycomb" and returns them to the surface on receipt of a ticket. The company says it is already talking to a number of West End hotels, London councils and Government ministries about building car parks in the centre of the capital.

The great advantage of the Trevi system is that it leaves almost no visual trace of its presence above ground — just a ticket machine and a platform that sinks into the ground to deposit the car. They are also secure, making them particularly attractive to organisations needing a high level of security, such as the Ministry of Defence or Downing Street.

Typically, while hundreds of spanking new automated car parks are already installed in France, Germany, Italy and elsewhere in Europe, Britain has been slow to catch on to the technology. Three were built in this country in the 1960s, two in central London and one in Leeds, but used cumbersome, pre-computer age equipment and are now approaching the end of their useful lives.

If the idea does take off and the British public can be persuaded to entrust their beloved cars to computers and robots, the multistoreys that blight so many towns and cities will soon be tumbling down with the regularity of council tower blocks. Only the film industry, with its love of rooftop chases and car park shoot-outs, will mourn.



Massed wheels at the 1948 Royal County Show, Salisbury: half a century later, high technology could handle all these, even making them vanish underground

The Trevi: after the subterranean honeycomb, left, is completed, only a ticket machine and a platform that sinks into the ground to deposit the car, right, are visible

ROADS IN DECAY

Drivers need to be told the hole truth

BRITAIN's motorists need a full-time, paid-up, scientific and totally objective pothole and road sign counter, *writes Vaughan Freeman.*

Richard Diment of the British Road Federation, says there is a need for a standalone body able to assess and report on the state of the nation's roads. His call comes in the wake of this week's report that personal injury and damage compensation claims arising out of accidents caused by potholes are climbing at the rate of 30 per cent a year.

The Refined Bitumen Association says there are more than 200 insurance claims filed every week as a result of pothole damage, at a possible annual cost to insurers of more than £3.6 million.

Diment says: "We need something akin to the Prisons or Schools Inspectorate, except for roads, an independent body, adequately funded, charged with going out there and reporting back on particular aspects of the nation's road system, such as the conditions of signs, road surfaces, and so on."

The BRF claims that the Government's own National Road Maintenance Condition Survey, while reporting a deterioration in the state of many classes of road in recent years, does not accurately reflect the condition of the network because there are no agreed national standards, and because it is a visual survey relying on "snapshots" of selected sections.

Surface loss: maintenance is also down

In 1994 road surface defects were directly linked to accidents involving 1,344 injuries; nearly 6,000 injuries were linked to accidents at roadworks and 600 related to defective or obscured road signs.

THE LEVEL of funding on road maintenance certainly appears to be in decline. Structural and current maintenance expenditure fell from £380 million in 1996 to an expected £147 million this year, while in 1994/95 some 840 nearside lane kilometres of trunk road and motorway were renewed compared to 130 nearside lane kilometres planned for renewal during 1996/97.

According to the Freight Transport Association: "The 1995 National Road Maintenance Condition Survey confirms that 3.9 per cent of trunk motorways and 7.3 per cent of all-purpose trunk roads — more than 1,000 kilometres — have reached the point where major strengthening or reconstruction work is necessary. On the non-trunk principal road network, for which local highway authorities are responsible, 25 per cent, or more than 8,000 kilometres of road, will need major structural repair within four years."

There is little point defending people who saw graphic reports of the carnage on the M42 and brought about a repeat of that carnage next morning

Let there be light in the foggy gloom

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

Peter Barnard

He was an American policeman out of a Hollywood movie, only for real. The blue lights of his highway patrol vehicle flashed behind me in the suburbs of Washington DC and I pulled over. We had a lengthy conversation about what he was entitled to do with me, which included jailing me overnight, but parted amicably after a stern warning.

Tailgating, or driving too close to the vehicle in front, is a specific offence in the United States and the law is enforced with vigour. In Britain, the offence is not specific but it is an offence, though I suspect it is not policed to anything like the extent that speeding is.

There is little point trying to defend the people who on Monday night saw graphic television reports of the carnage on the M42 and proceeded to bring about a repeat of that carnage on Tuesday morning. The emergency services said that drivers were moving too fast for the foggy conditions and that they were driving too close to each other.

The behaviour of some British drivers in fog is quite beyond belief. We can imagine the scene: people travelling too fast and too close together see an accident in the opposite carriageway and slow down to rubberneck. A combination of the slowing down and the proximity of following cars leads to a multiple pile-up.

I do not advocate fast driving in fog, but if people were far enough apart their speed would not be so fatally relevant. I have spoken against some of our speed limits in the past, but there is no argument against temporary limits imposed in fog and people who exceed them by, say, more than 10mph ought to suffer stiff automatic penalties.

But I do believe that something else could be done. The provision of rear fog lights on cars has been standard for many decades and can be a lifesaver in fog. But I also think they have the capacity to cause accidents. There is implicit official recognition of this danger, because it is illegal to have fog lights on unless necessary.

The reason is that fog lights can be blinding. But they are not just blinding in themselves. When the car in front has its fog lights on, the overall impression of the lighting on the back of that car is about the same as one gets when its brake lights come on. So, when the brakes are applied with the fog lights on, the increase in light emitted from the car is less than would otherwise be the case.

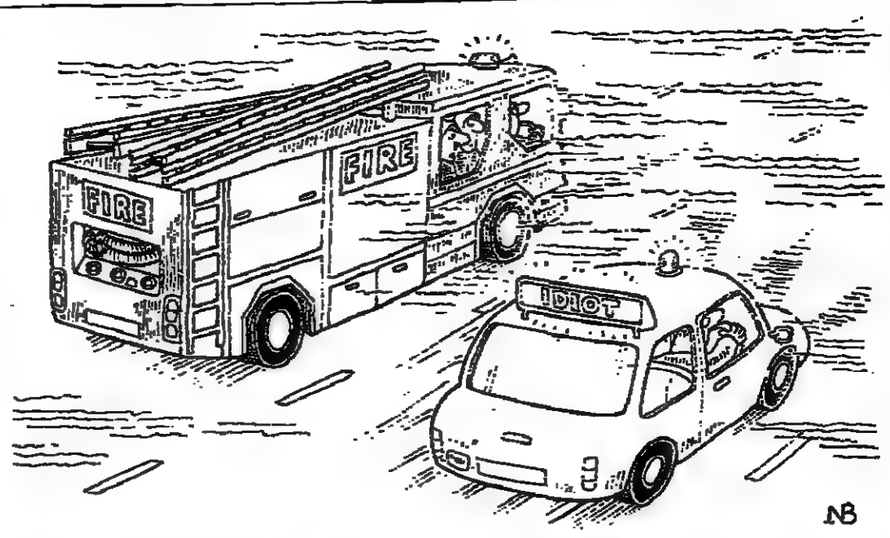
Resultantly, I believe that drivers react to brake lights a fraction of a second later when fog lights are on than when they are not. The consequences of such a delay, multiplied through 100 cars travelling at speed, could be catastrophic. I have nothing but anecdotal experience to back this claim, but other drivers I have spoken to this week have the same impression.

So what could be done? I think the best answer would be for fog lights to be of a different colour, such as orange. They would stand out as much as they do now, but would break the pattern of red rear lights, red fog lights and red brake lights that make up the present arrangement.

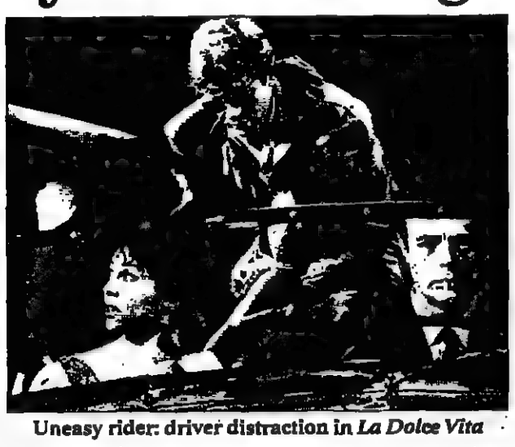
None of which cures bad driving. We could have a system whereby parachute flares were launched and klaxons sounded every time someone brushed against the brake pedal, but that would never compensate for idiots travelling too fast and too close together. The driver of a fire engine heading for the main accident on the M42 found himself being overtaken by people travelling at 70mph in visibility below 50 metres.

Stupidity of that order is beyond the remit of common sense reasoning, but it is not outside the law. With the backing of the transport department, police forces could announce that patrols will in future take the details of such cars (stopping them in thick fog would be too hazardous) and prosecute for dangerous driving, an offence which gives magistrates' courts the option of very severe penalties.

Some may think that draconian. I can only direct them to the funerals of those who died this week.



Smoking can be bad for your driving



Uneasy rider: driver distraction in *La Dolce Vita*

Simon Hacker on why tobacco and Tarmac is a dangerous combination

Smoking can kill — at least it can when you are at the wheel of your car. For smoking is high on the list of distractions that can vitally have motorists worrying more about their next "fix" of nicotine than what is going on around their cars.

The idea that the attention of drivers wanders is not new: motorists find a suprising number of things to do at the wheel. One in five quizzed for the Lex Report on Motoring admitted to reading a map, a conservative 13 per cent used their mobile telephone — and 3 per cent confessed to kissing and cuddling. Yet more admitted they have shaved, put on make-up, or done their hair while driving.

In the week of No Smoking Day though, one story headlines smoking. A 21-year-old Swindon woman passenger died last summer after her driver swerved and collided with a lorry while trying to dislodge a burning cigarette from her window sill.

Dr Andrew Parrott, at the University of East London, has studied what happens when motorists try to drive and smoke, and found a driver can be distracted by the simple act of inhaling. "It's a similar action to driving while using a mobile phone. Your concentration is inevitably distracted from the road," he says.

The Association of British Insurers says an argument exists within the industry that non-smokers make safer drivers, but the Department of Transport has no plans to echo the drink-driving message to target smokers and insurers remain uncertain.

For heavily addicted smokers, foregoing a cigarette might be more dangerous. Dr Parrott adds: "These tests showed that if you're nicotine-dependent, your attention while driving is likely to suffer without a cigarette. Non-smokers are fortunate because they simply don't have this problem."

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) suspects smoke-related accidents go largely unreported. Smokers spark about 260 accidental car fires and take the blame for another 146 from carelessly discarded matches annually.

A puff while behind the wheel, claims ASH, borders on dangerous driving. The cigarette packet has to be located visually, then opened, the cigarette extracted, put into the mouth and lit — a task that requires one or even both hands leaving the wheel. Just holding a cigarette reduces your grip on the wheel, smoke can obscure your vision, and at night match flames can trigger momentary vision loss.

In the second-hand car market, prices are knocked by the smell of tobacco. Robin Oliphant, managing director of Glass's Guide, the car trader's price index, says: "The smell of a car when a dealer sits in it at auction is as important to him as the car's colour."

Cars entering Vauxhall's approved used car scheme, Network Q, get a dose of air freshener before they see the forecourt. But a spokeswoman said that customers sometimes insist that the car has never been driven by a smoker.

The Driving Standards Agency says smoking is not expressly banned during the driving test, but is judged by an examiner as a legitimate reason for failure. Says Christine Nickles: "You have to be able to steer the car properly, so it's a question of control. If someone lit up, they wouldn't be able to control the car, and the examiner would ask them to leave the cigarette until after the test."

AA GRIDLOCK GUIDE

● LONDON
A2400 Bloomsbury. Resurfacing work on Upper Woburn Place and east side of Tavistock Square.
A366 Hammersmith Bridge. Closed both ways to general traffic.
A304 Fulham Broadway. Closed both ways between Harwood Road and Barclay Road.
A3 Kingston bypass. Northbound lane closure between Shannon Corner (A298) and Coombe Lane junction.
M1 Hendon area. Major roadworks at Five Ways Corner, with no access to or from the A1 Great North Way.
A3212 Westminster Bridge. Closed overnight and at weekends (9pm-6am).

● SOUTH-EAST
M40 Buckinghamshire. Long-term roadworks with a contraflow between junctions 1a (M25) and 2 (Beaconsfield).
M27 Hampshire. Contraflow between junctions 7 (Hedge End) and 9 (Fareham West). Also major roadworks and contraflow between junctions 8 and 10.
A31 Ringwood, Hampshire. Major roadworks with a contraflow.
M20 Maidstone, Kent. One lane closed off-peak in both directions.
M25 Surrey. Restrictions and lane closures between Godstone and the A3.

● SOUTH-WEST
M5 Bristol. Contraflow across Avonmouth bridge with 50mph limit.
M5 Gloucestershire. Major roadworks with only one lane open at roundabout junction with the A419.
M49 Gloucestershire. Closed in both directions all weekend between M4 Severn crossing approach and M5 Avonmouth. Diversion via M4 and M5.

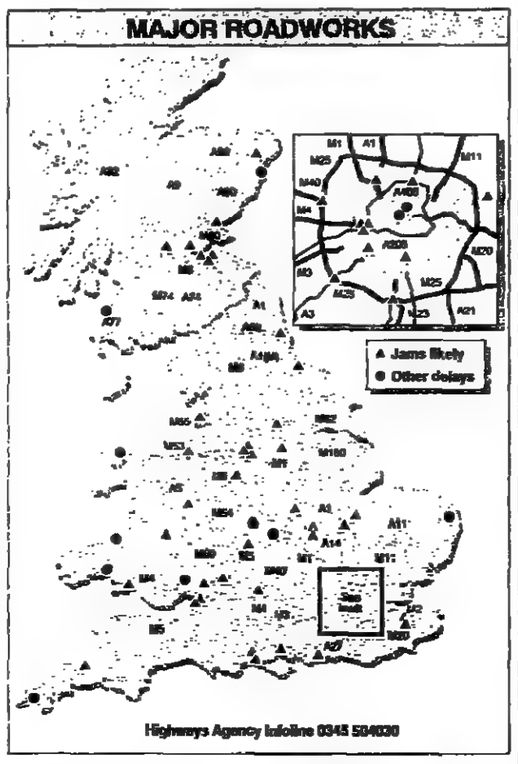
● MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA
A1 Alconbury, Cambridgeshire. Reduced to one lane northbound during maintenance work at Alconbury Hills (A14/A604), as is the A14.
A43 between Kettering and Corby. Resurfacing work between Geddington and Little Oakley turning.
A500 Stoke area, Staffordshire. Contraflow with only one lane open each way between Talke (A34) and Longport (A527 Porthill).

● NORTH
M63 Greater Manchester. Southbound entry slip road closed at junction 10 (M56). Also maintenance work between junctions 11 (Cheadle) and 12 (Stockport).
A585 Lancashire. Roadworks on Fleetwood Road, between Wesham Circle and Hellfire Corner.
A19 Middlesbrough area. Major roadworks between Thornaby-on-Tees and North Tees industrial estate.
M1 South Yorkshire. Carriageway reduced to two lanes in both directions between Meadowhall and Rotherham with 50mph limit.
M1 West Yorkshire. Major roadworks continue around the Leeds junction.
A19 Moor Farm roundabout, Tyne & Wear. Major roadworks north of Long Benton at Backworth.

● WALES
A482 Aberaeron, Ceredigion. Upper Aberaeron bridge on South Road closed for reconstruction work.
A48 Carmarthen. Temporary lights and lane restrictions on Pensarn roundabout (A484).
A44 between Llangurig and Elsteddfa Gurig, Powys. Temporary lights for roadworks.
A472 Pontypool, Torfaen. Contraflow between Pontymoile and the Heron roundabout.

● SCOTLAND
A947 Oldmeldrum to Banff Road, Aberdeenshire. Resurfacing work with contraflow at Balcaim.
M8 Edinburgh. Major roadworks, with lane closures on the roundabout at junction 2 (Newbridge Spur, M9).

MAJOR ROADWORKS



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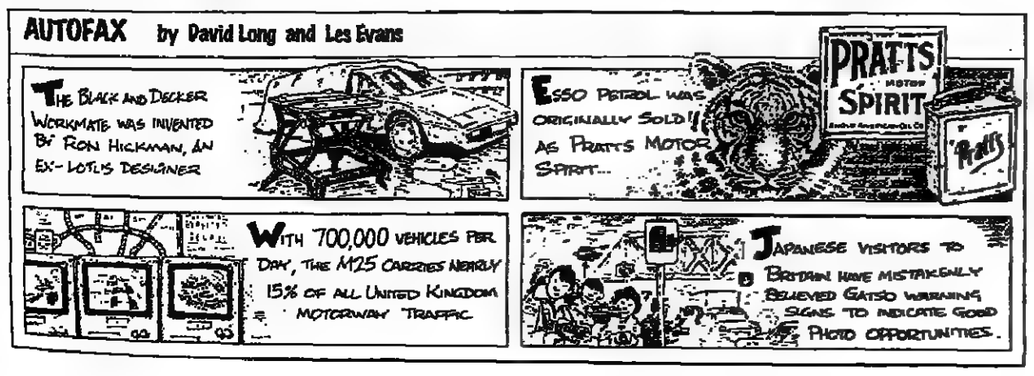


ANDRE CAMARA

Working out at Templars: leisure activities figured prominently in customer demands, but you can work as well

Repair your own bodywork while they mend the car

A gym and sporting facilities will all be part of the service at Volvo garages in future, says **Sue Baker**

Taking the car to be serviced has always been a quick route to shedding pounds from your bank balance. Now there is a trend towards inviting you to shed pounds of fat at the same time.

A new garage in Kent, off the M25 near Orpington, has a gym, with changing room and shower, behind the showroom. Customers are offered free use of the facilities, including a running machine, step machine, rowing equipment, exercise bike and training weights, while their cars are worked on.

If they would prefer to play a round of golf while the car is in the workshop, the garage has made arrangements with a nearby club, and is offering a voucher for a free game at the nine-hole course. A courtesy car delivers them to the course and collects them when their car is ready.

More workaholic customers are offered the use of a desk, installed in a corner of the showroom, with free telephone and fax. Nearby is a coffee bar with hot drinks, danish pastries for elevenses and lunchtime sandwiches.

At a discreet distance from the business desk, customers' children are catered for in an activity centre equipped with toys, soft furniture, supplies of Lego and a Super Nintendo video game.

The garage, called Templars, is a Volvo dealership, named after Simon Templar, the fictional hero played by Roger Moore in the cult 1960s television series, *The Saint*, and now made into a film starring Val Kilmer, due out next month.

The connection comes from the car Moore drove in the role: a Volvo P1800 sports coupé. Kilmer's version races across the screen in its modern equivalent, a Volvo C70 Coupé, the turbocharged model launched at last year's Motor Show.

Andrew Regan, the dealer principal, sees the facilities as part of a growing trend aimed at giving motorists a more pleasant experience in their relationship with their garage. He says the gym and golf offers have gone down very well with customers, and the business desk is also in demand.

Templars is part of the Pendragon motor retail group, which carried out research into how motorists would like to spend their time while the car is in for a service. Leisure activities figured prominently: playing golf and visits to a gym came high on the list. Others with more workaholic tendencies enthused over the idea of being given access to office facilities.

Regan believes that the motor trade is undergoing evolution and increasingly looking for ways to break down the traditional resistance people have towards their dealings with garages. He admits that it was not so much breaking new ground as opening up another avenue beyond the pattern already set by Daewoo to make car showrooms more welcoming places.

He acknowledged it as a sign that Daewoo's initiative — at first derided in the motor trade — is now steadily percolating through it.

"Their way of doing business is to say to people they will be under no pressure from the moment their feet cross the threshold. I do not believe there is anything dramatically wrong with the garage industry as it is, but there are subtle changes going on to change the perception people have."

Templars is one of the first garages to implement ideas in a programme which Volvo has been quietly developing. Clive Goodall, Volvo's customer relationship development manager, is the mastermind behind the scheme, his job title underlining the message — it has just been changed from sales development manager. He says the motor trade has too often been known in the past for incompetent levels of product knowledge combined with inadequate customer handling skills.

"This is an industry problem. We seem to be stuck in the 1960s and we need to go forward, re-engineering it from the customer's viewpoint. Daewoo has broken the mould, it has acted as a catalyst reminding the rest of the industry what they should be doing to make customers feel comfortable," he says.

"We need to be benchmarking ourselves not against other car dealers, but against the best that people experience in other areas. What the Ritz Carlton is in the hotel business is what we must aim to be in the motor business."

Garages will increasingly be measured by such details as not only the fact that they offer a cup of coffee to customers, but by the quality of the coffee in the cup.

"We are getting to grips with that level of detail. If a customer pulls up outside a garage when it is raining, someone should be there with an umbrella to greet them, just as happens in good hotels," he adds.

Already two other garages, Tamplins in Croydon, Surrey, and Bridge Cross in Wolverhampton, are piloting facilities similar to those at Templars, and by the end of the year all Volvo dealerships should have them.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Vauxhall widens the cover

VAUXHALL has turned up the heat in the sales wars as first of the big carmakers to offer customers three-year warranties. Owners of new Vectra, Omega and Calibra models will benefit to fit in with the three-year cover being offered on the new Sintra. The company says that the introduction is experimental, before extending similar deals to the rest of the range.

Falling 4x4s

GOOD news and bad news in the market for 4x4s and people carriers. *Glass's Guide* says the glut of models in the market will mean second-hand prices tumbling during the year — good news for prospective owners entering the used market.

ROVER has got its foot on the expansion throttle in Japan: the company has got 123 dealers and wants 160 by the end of the year with the Rover 200 and 400 selling well, and the evergreen Mini as popular as ever. Rover sells around 9,000 a year to Japan, more than to any other country.

Super success

SUPERBIKES are clearly the coolest transport, with registrations up 92 per cent in February over the same month last year. Best-selling big bike was Honda's Fireblade CBR900RR followed by Triumph's new Daytona T595. (See page 8)

Fording on

THE LURE of a year's road tax was enough for pensioner Hope Till to buy his 52nd Ford in 47 years. The Reg Vardy dealership in Wolverhampton was so impressed with Hope's devotion to the blue oval that it offered to pay his road tax on each new car, so he traded in his Fiesta for a new one. His first — in 1950, when Attlee was Prime Minister — was a £365 Ford Anglia.

'On first acquaintance, this will prove to be one of the least formidable MPVs'

From the outside: the Sintra offers that essential tall profile and glassy superstructure that declares lots of seats and cat-swinging space

Ian Morton assesses the Sintra, Vauxhall's entry into the increasingly busy marketplace of people carriers

Finally, we know. General Motors has at last launched its answer to the huge line-up of people carriers filling showrooms to bursting point. The Vauxhall Sintra is the latest — though it will not be the last — in the motoring phenomenon that has seen just about every other major name scrambling for a slice of the market for people carriers, or multi-purpose vehicles (MPVs).

Yet Vauxhall comes to the market after Ford, Volkswagen, Peugeot, Citroën, Chrysler and several others. In answer to "Why bother?", Ian Coomber, Vauxhall's executive director of sales and marketing, says: "We have spent considerable time, energy and resource building customer loyalty. Inevitably, many Vauxhall customers are thinking of changing to a MPV-style vehicle, so it makes sense to develop and sell what they want."

The other question is whether it has been worth the wait. Well, the Sintra is already tried and tested, a Europeanised version of the General Motors people carriers built in the US. The Sintra comes from the platform shared by three GM companies in the States, marketed as the Chevrolet Venture, Pontiac Trans Sport and Oldsmobile Silhouette.

But how different is the Sintra from its rivals here in Europe? It will barely register on the Richter scale of automotive arrivals. This is not necessarily a criticism, for no full-sized MPV has managed to leap free of the basic format brilliantly resolved by Renault and Matra when founding the modern MPV movement (well, at least in Europe) with the Espace — and that goes for Renault itself with the all-new Espace. It is a question of juggling the dimensions and of refinement of detail rather than radical reform.

The Sintra has the essentials: tall profile and glassy superstructure that declares lots of seats and cat-swinging space, the dominant driving position and comprehensive visibility, a control area that tries very hard to emulate a "real car", multi-seat interior layout, easy access through sliding rear side-doors.

There are differences, of course. While main competitors such as the Ford Galaxy, VW Sharan and Chrysler Voyager — let alone the Toyota Previa and the forthcoming recast Espace — feature boldly curvy fascia treatment and high-style contemporary detail, the Sintra favours a deep and heavy-looking dash with round-cornered mouldings and ultra-conventional dials and switchgear. Every item is large, clear, and a short reach away. The only conspicuously space-age touch is a liquid crystal display trip-information panel on the dash.

MARQUE OF THE MONTH

VAUXHALL

Conservative it may all be, but among the MPVs this will prove one of the least formidable on first acquaintance for the average motorist, and certainly for the motorist familiar with modern Vauxhalls. There are no problems of scale for anyone who wants simply to hop in and drive off, particularly a plus in the hire market, where familiarity breeds confidence rather than contempt.

Inevitably, there is some compromise. The gear lever is rather a downward arm-stretch while the tilt-adjust steering column, available only with CDX specification, really should be part of the standard specification for the seat height adjustment does not quite achieve the ideal on its own.

But the basic CD specification vehicle still makes a strong case, with anti-lock brakes, air-conditioning, twin airbags, power-operation of the front windows and generous door mirrors, remote control central locking, alarm and engine immobiliser, alloy wheels and five seats.

In its humblest form, the Sintra arrives at £19,100 with a 2.2-litre, 16-valve engine pushing 139 brake horse power through a five-speed manual box. It is a remarkably refined and discreet unit, not least of all because it is Vauxhall's first to feature twin balancer shafts, that great British invention from the pioneering days latterly rediscovered by the likes of Mitsubishi, Lancia, Porsche and Ford.

Driven off the crankshaft, the shafts contra-rotate at twice the engine speed and have the effect of cancelling out secondary inertia forces. So they quell almost all mechanical vibration and noise. This 2.2-litre, four-cylinder unit accordingly delivers virtually as smoothly as a six, hauling from rest to 60mph in around 12.5 seconds and showing 118mph flat out. More usefully, it pulls comfortably in fifth gear from 1,000rpm, has energetic responses in the crucial middle speed band, and cruises comfortably at 70mph for a modest 2,500rpm. The engine will spin to 5,000rpm, yet its voice remains barely heard below the red line.

This is due to levels of tyre and suspension noise, sufficient to dominate even on an average road, and it must be said that the ride is on the firm side. While individual ruts and ridges get their edges rounded off, a series of undulations taken at particular speeds can get the whole vehicle pitching. For the sake of overall smoothness, a little less European sportiness and a little more US-style ride comfort might improve the balance.

But for the driver in a hurry, that sporty feel does not mislead as the Sintra turns out to have real cross-country ability. No matter how hard it is thrust over unkind roads, this MPV does not allow itself to be thrown off-line. Jaunty it may be, but it always runs well-knit and tidy and never feels top-heavy.

High speeds can be maintained along bumpy straights, and the consistency of road rumble and the lack of engine noise might lead to excessive approach speeds as the bends arrive, but the brakes are great, the steering has pleasing elasticity and enough weight to induce confidence, and in tight fast curves the driver's nerve is likely to give way well before the Sintra's roadholding. The motorist determined to make up lost time can give passengers an interesting if not wholly comfortable experience.

The top model has a smoother manner. Powered by a 3-litre V6, worth 198bhp through a four-speed automatic box, it shows 60mph within 10.5 seconds and whirls on to 126mph. Maximum torque is delivered at 3,600rpm and there is never a pause in the power flow. The ride seems more fluid in this version, which suits a car with CDX status, a £25,350 price tag and such goodies as power front seats and sunroof, automatic load levelling, cruise control, remote audio controls on the steering wheel, compact disc player, telephone installation kit and seven seats.

These seats are not the burden they might seem when it comes to clearing more luggage space, since the frames are magnesium alloy and at 38lbs they weigh considerably less than those of other MPVs — a bonus for families who decide they want to switch and swap their seating arrangements on those vital long holiday outings.

SINTRA FACTS AND FIGURES

Engines: 2.2-litre, four-cylinder developing 139 brake horse power through five-speed gearbox. Also 3-litre V6, developing 198bhp through four-speed automatic box.

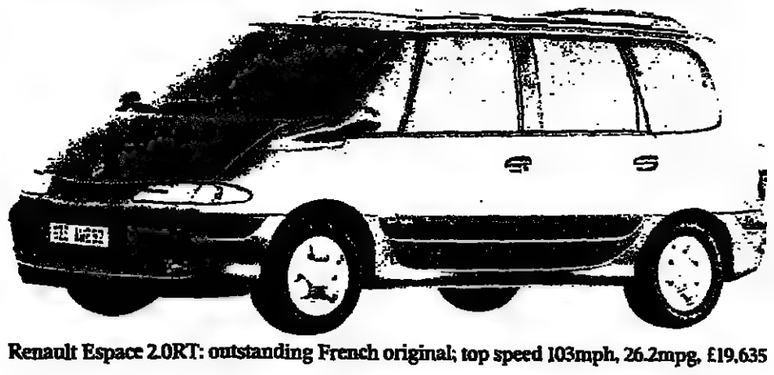
Performance: 2.2 — 0-60mph in 12.5 seconds; top speed 118mph; average fuel consumption 29.4mpg. V6 — 0-60mph in 10.5 seconds, top speed 126 mph.

Equipment: Air-conditioning, anti-lock brakes, dual airbags, alloy wheels, twin sliding side doors, pollen filter. Options include eight-seat configuration (£750), electric sun roof (£700) and metallic paint (£240).

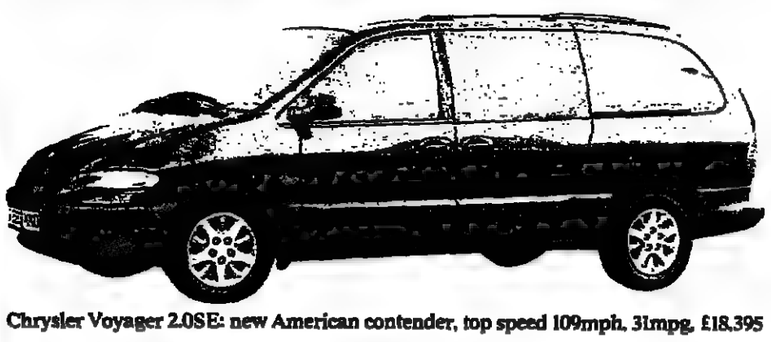
Price: CD2.2 16v, £19,100; CDX 3.0 V6, £25,350.

From the inside: efforts to emulate a "real" car combine with multi-seat layout and easy-access sliding rear side-doors

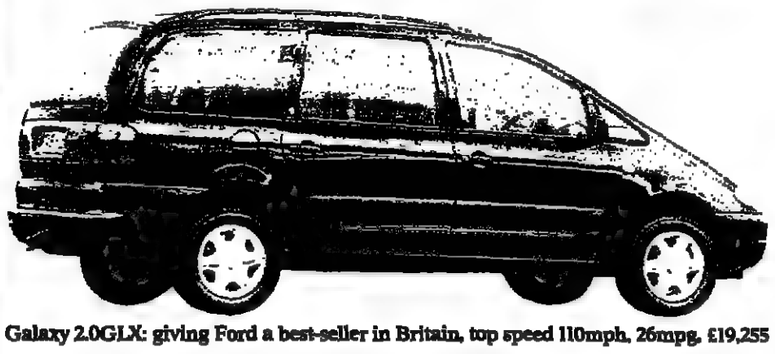
INTERNATIONAL LINE-UP OF THE RIVALS



Renault Espace 2.0RT: outstanding French original; top speed 103mph, 26.2mpg, £19,635

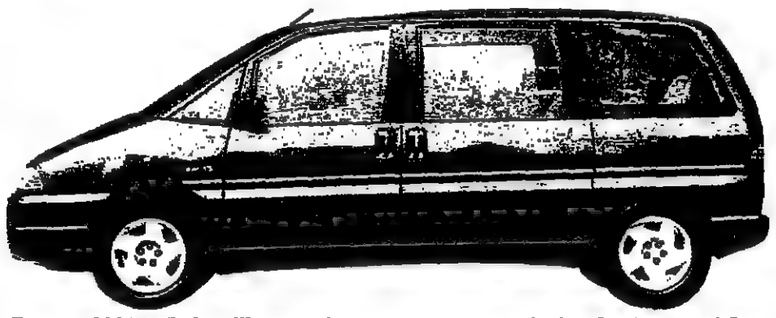


Chrysler Voyager 2.0SE: new American contender, top speed 109mph, 31mpg, £18,395



Galaxy 2.0GLX: giving Ford a best-seller in Britain, top speed 110mph, 26mpg, £19,255

Honda Shuttle 2.2ES: the challenger from Japan, top speed 109mph, 22mpg, £23,585



Peugeot 806 2.0SR: box-like French newcomer; top speed 110mph, 30mpg, £19,540

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Helen Mound revels in the breathtaking power offered by the Range Rover S and the Porsche 911 Turbo

All-conquering kings of the off-road

They look like speed-boat and cruiser as they plough a bow wave any sea-going vessel would be proud of. Except that these two are distinctly landlubbing four-wheelers — and built more with performance in mind than taking to the water.

Think four-wheel drive and images of lumbering box-shaped vehicles with the aerodynamics of the average house brick leap to mind. Not Porsche's stunning 911 Turbo though — and definitely not the king of the off-roaders, the Range Rover after it has been spiced up by J. E. Engineering — and the man who knows all about Range Rovers because he invented them: Spen King.

The Range Rover has supercharged power; the Porsche twin-turbo-charged power. J. E.'s engineers — performance specialists better known for their work on competition cars — have rebuilt the Range Rover's 4.6-litre V8 engine to precise tolerances so they could fit a supercharger. And all the power comes from the simplest of sources: a little button on the dashboard. One press unleashes an extra 115 brake horse power which kicks in with a jolt. Next to the button is a light that glows red when the Range Rover S is running in normally aspirated form, which means a by-pass valve is open and the belt-driven supercharger — the "blower" — simply expels its charge into the atmosphere.

Press the button though and the light turns green, the by-pass valve shuts and: Wham! The blower does its stuff. Normal acceleration figures from standstill to 60mph of 10.5 seconds become a Linford Christie rocket-powered sprint, completed in just 6.8 seconds, while the top speed keeps on rising, from 119mph to 133mph.

Switching the supercharger on and off with a button is a gimmick, but a fantastic one which surprises passengers with the extra wallop.

King, a legend for designing the Range Rover and now J. E. Engineering's design director, says: "Today's engines are very complex from an electronic management perspective. To alter any part presents knock-on effects through the system. We had to analyse these before we could start the reconstruction process."

That analysis has resulted in supercharged-performance that feels perfectly at home in the Range Rover. After all, you expect the 911 to be fast, very fast indeed. Knowing it's the fastest, most powerful Porsche is one thing, but just feeling the astonishing power and the lateral acceleration generated in cornering is breathtaking.

Even in supercharged thrust mode, the Range Rover S disappears into a dot in the 911's rear-view mirror in seconds. The contest becomes house-on-wheels versus slippery curves, a direct comparison which isn't fair. Though the manner in which these two 4x4s can deliver their spine-tingling performance is worth comparing, especially on the prickliest rural roads — or the choppiest waters.

Although the Range Rover can't catch the Porsche through twisty roads, it is remarkably agile for something so enormous. Fire up the supercharged Range Rover and, apart from the sexy burble from the exhaust, there's little to suggest such extensive engine modifications under the bonnet. There is certainly no temperamental behaviour common to re-worked engines, no pops or hiccups, just an enthusiastic throb from the V8 that's been slightly enlarged to 4.65-litres.

The car would be a bit of a handful without J. E.'s uprated suspension — all that performance with softer dampers would test even the strongest faith in its stability — but stiffened it hustles along securely and takes corners confidently, though there is a need for more feedback from the steering. The "S" responds well enough but it takes time to gain confidence in its ability to turn swiftly. Perhaps the vague steering, a side-effect of off-roaders shod with huge tyres, is a little out of place on a near-£100,000 speedster.

But there is the advantage of extra ground clearance if water does loom — something that would worry the wayward Porsche driver, 4x4 or not. Ron Hall, J. E.'s chairman, says: "We've worked on many rally cars that compete in the strenuous Paris-Dakar Rally, but not one has ever gone out with engine failure, so we are pretty proud of our engine conversions."

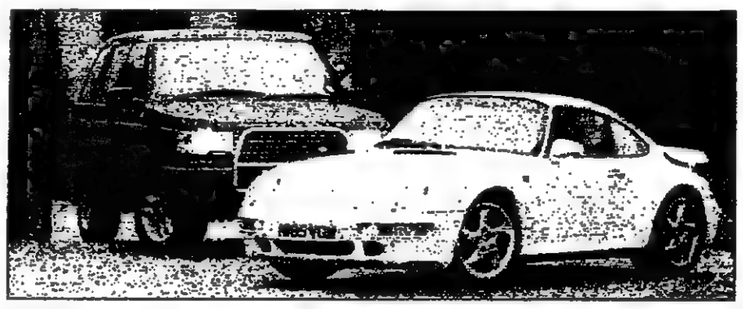
The "S" is a slick conversion that shows in both the performance and the price. For these two are the only 4x4 cars on British roads which boast price tags closing in on £100,000. The 911 Turbo starts at £97,950 and personalised trim is an extra £2,000-plus. J. E. Engineering's price list for a Range Rover S is bespoke: £33,500 for the hand-built supercharged V8 engine; £47,765 for the basic car and, if you indulge in the impressive list of extras, you could be looking at a Ferrari-priced king-of-the-off-road. Options include uprated brakes and suspension for £7,527, walnut and leather interior trim for £10,340, magnesium wheels at £3,925, a satellite navigation system for another £7,214, and electrically-controlled individual rear seats with fridge, cocktail bar and matching crystal for yet another £21,032.

And the supercharged Range Rover is only one of J. E. Engineering's creations. The company offers a performance conversion for Land Rover's TDi engine too and a V8 preparation for road and track in 4-litre, 4.5 and 5-litre form. If personalised trim is your preference, the business specialises in wood and leather.

Putting together such a meaty package takes time: four weeks — but that is not so long to wait for what is probably the best — certainly the fastest and most exciting — 4x4 money can buy.

TONY WHITE

House-on-wheels versus slippery curves: the 911 leads the Range Rover S through the water, but the manner in which these two 4x4s can deliver their spine-tingling performance is worth comparing



RANGE ROVER S	PORSCHE 911 TURBO
Engine: 4.65-litre supercharged V8 developing 340bhp through four-speed automatic.	**Engine:** Six-cylinder, 3.6-litre, twin-turbo developing 408bhp at 5,750rpm through a six-speed manual gearbox.
Performance: 0-60mph in 6.8 seconds, top speed 133mph; fuel economy likely to be around 15mpg average.	**Performance:** 0-62mph in 4.5 seconds, top speed 180mph; fuel economy 13.4mpg in town (no figures for water-logged travel).
Price: £88,824 (includes engine, suspension and brake modifications).	**Price:** £97,950 (personalised trim £2,085).

A challenge of mud, toil, tears and sweat

You don't have to be mad to take part in the Camel Trophy, but it helps, says Perry Cleveland-Peck

Created by sadists, attempted by masochists, completed by those who now know better. Yes, it's the Camel Trophy — 20 or so days of filth, boil-in-the-bag bush tucker and extreme exhaustion across thousands of kilometres of inhospitable terrain, making for one of the world's toughest motoring events. If the defining memory of last year's competition, through the Kalimantan rainforests of Indonesia and Borneo, was mud, mud and more mud, this year's will probably be the vast extremes in temperature.

From the minus 10C of the Mongolian north, to the plus 40C of the Gobi desert should, if nothing else, make for a display of Camel's entire autumn, winter, spring and summer clothes collection.

But there are doubts as to whether the natives of Mongolia will be queuing up beside this 1,500 mile catwalk. They, like other sensible people, will be monitoring the progress of the competition, to start on May 11, from the comfort of their own homes — either that or attempting to work out exactly why these crazy sportsmen are driving their Land Rovers through the impossible. But just how will the vehicles stand up?

For 16 of the 17 years of the Camel Trophy, Land Rover has supplied the transport. An official co-sponsor of the Trophy since 1992, Land Rover knows that the performance of its vehicles during the Camel competitions will be a testimony to the British workhorses.

"The vehicles have done us a sterling service," says Nick Horne of Global Events Management, organisers of the Camel Trophy. "They are exceptionally good motor cars; robust enough and ideally suited to the type of conditions and terrain we encounter. Last year, for example, was probably one of, if not the, toughest event so far but the cars stood up to it exceptionally well — they got through 2,500 kilometres of sheer hell."

The 2.5-litre Discovery TDi Land Rovers used in the Camel Trophy are essentially the same as their Solihull production-line cousins. The competition Discovery TDis, now running in their eighth consecutive Trophy, are fitted with sump and fuel tank guards to protect their undersides from such dangers as submerged tree stumps or hidden rocks which might rip open their mechanical innards (fuel tank protection was introduced after Brazil in 1984 when a tank was holed), and the Land Rovers incorporate raised air-intake pipes to allow for a continued supply of oxygen to the engine when most of the car is submerged during river crossings.

Inside, the drivers get satellite navigation, vital for establishing their position, VHF radio and satellite 'phone, which provides essential communication with the competition basecamps, and an electronic trip computer to monitor the vehicle's speed, fuel consumption and distances covered. Also included are fire extinguishers and a hand-held winch control unit which enables the 8,500lb electric winch on the front bumper, used to drag bogged-down vehicles from over-possessive mud, to be operated from outside the car.

There are no modifications to the transmission, the turbocharged, direct-injection diesel engines or the power units. "We add on equipment for the event: bull bars, extra lights, roll cages," says Gwil Berry, Land Rover's Special Events Manager, "and we stiffen the suspension to take the extra weight, with double helper springs at the rear, and that is about it."

During the event the teams are competing pretty much on their own so their vehicles have to carry everything to enable the occupants to be entirely self-sufficent. There are two 22-litre drinking water cans stowed in the rear of the vehicle behind a dog guard (to keep dislodged equipment from flying around the passenger compartment), two waterproof aluminium food boxes and two 22-litre fuel cans.

For Mongolia 97, the organisers have introduced a number of new special competitions: mountain biking and kayaking are included, so the Land Rovers have a full-length roof-rack which will hold a two-man kayak, two mountain bikes and the spare parts for the bikes. Also housed up top will be the essential shovel and pick axe — without a doubt some of the most vital and well used pieces of equipment in the event.

"We have established a specification which we have used for the last seven or eight years," says Berry. "The same goes for the ambulance and film crew's support vehicles."

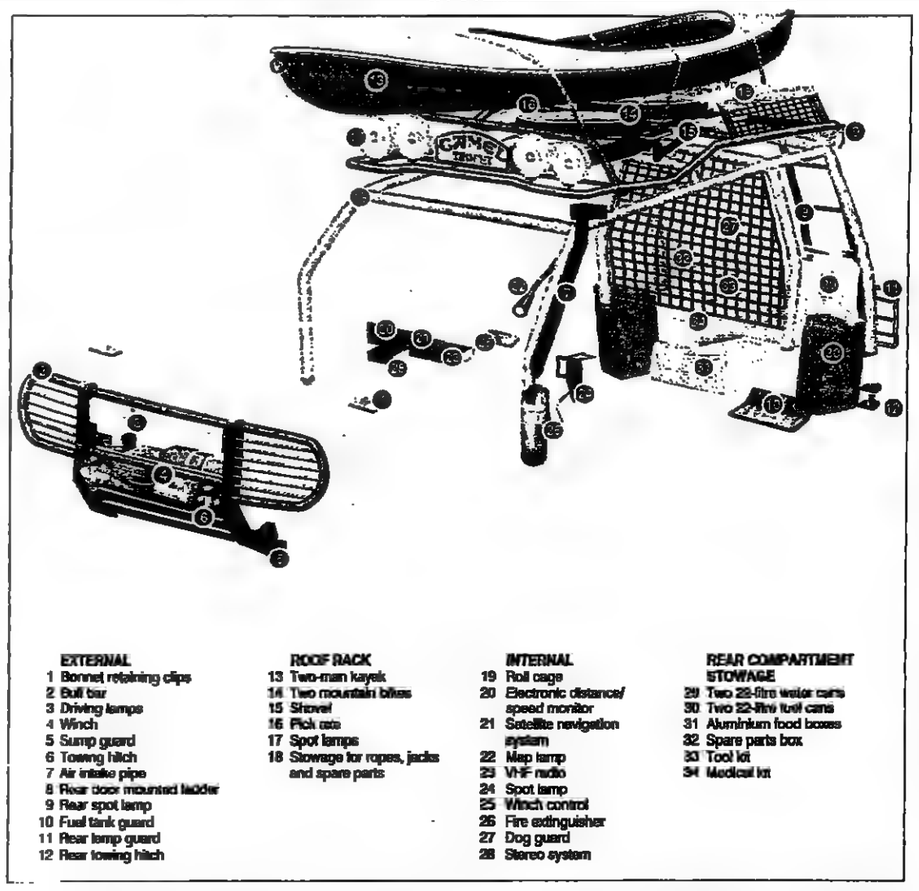
Each year a team from Land Rover accompanies the Trophy organisers on a "pre-scout" tour of the potential course. The tour takes between three and four weeks and occurs approximately a year before the event — though a lot can change in the intervening time.

"All the years are different," says Berry. "You can read about the environment and the climate on a pre-scout report and find that when the event actually happens the conditions are totally different."

When it comes to the weather, Mongolia will prove to be a real endurance-test for the Land Rovers. The event will pass through three very different climates: the lakes of Hovsgol in the mountainous north of Mongolia will, at the start of the competition, still be frozen, though by mid-May the ice should be beginning to melt. As the competition moves south through Mongolia's savannah steppe and its rolling grasslands it will encounter very wet weather and boggy terrain, providing great stretches of mud and thus ample opportunity for the participants to try their hands at winching their vehicles from the quagmire — a Camel Trophy favourite. If that does not get to the teams, the final 600 miles or so stretch across the heat and sand of the Gobi desert surely will.

However, all this has been accounted for at Land Rover. "We are confident that the engine and transmission will work well within these parameters," says Berry. "We would not expect the vehicle to give us any problems in that terrain. What you have to take into account is the guy behind the wheel — it is down to him and how he looks after the vehicle."

In fact the driver seems to be the only drawback to the smooth running of the competition vehicles. "I don't think we have ever had an engine go, for instance, or gearboxes or any major component parts," says Nick Horne, the event organiser. "The cars get beaten around a bit, of course, but if something does break, nine times out of ten it is down to the human element — either they have negotiated an obstacle badly or damaged the car because of their ineptitude."



EXTERNAL	ROOF RACK	INTERNAL	REAR COMPARTMENT STOWAGE
1 Bonnet retaining clips	13 Two-man kayak	19 Roll cage	29 Two 22-litre water cans
2 Bull bar	14 Two mountain bikes	20 Electronic distance/speed monitor	30 Two 22-litre fuel cans
3 Driving lamps	15 Shovel	21 Satellite navigation system	31 Aluminium food boxes
4 Winch	16 Pick axe	22 Map lamp	32 Spare parts box
5 Sump guard	17 Spot lamps	23 VHF radio	33 Tool kit
6 Towing hitch	18 Stowage for ropes, jacks and spare parts	24 Spot lamp	34 Medical kit
7 Air intake pipe		25 Winch control	
8 Rear door mounted ladder		26 Fire extinguisher	
9 Rear spot lamp		27 Dog guard	
10 Fuel tank guard		28 Stereo system	
11 Rear lamp guard			
12 Rear towing hitch			

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■ TEAMS have to battle their vehicles through some of the world's toughest terrain while performing special tasks such as bridge building, trekking by foot, building environmental field-stations, reopening routes or, as with this year's event, simply competing in other sports activities including, orienteering, mountain biking and kayaking.

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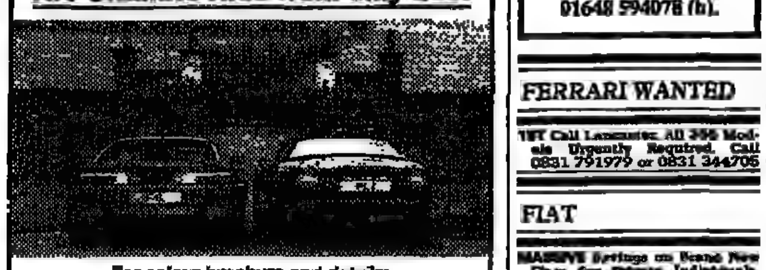

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CARMART: YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S NEW, AND WHAT'S USED, ON THE FORECOURTS

SPARE PARTS

Prix art: back to the classic age

■ NOW you can have the colour and zest of grands prix on your walls with the launch of a set of Formula One posters. They come from a new company, Formula One Grand Prix Archives — headed by Jeffrey Pattinson, chairman of Coys of Kensington, the auctioneers — which sets out to produce evocations of the classic posters of the Twenties and Thirties. The posters are by Dexter Brown, an artist who has won commissions from the Pininfarina design studios as well as Porsche.

There is a collection of 18 posters, priced £295 or £18.95 individually. Further information from FOGPA on 0171-584-2626.

■ AUTOLOK 2000, the mechanical steering wheel lock, above, has been approved by the influential TNO Research Institute in the Netherlands, adding to approval in Britain from the police and the Association of British Insurers. Cost about £70 from Halfords and the AA. Further information on 0161-624-8171.

■ PRICES of Alfa Romeo cars are up, with the Italian manufacturer announcing average increases of 1.4 per cent, though chances are the increases will not hurt the company's increasing sales after some lean years. The new price list means the range starts with the 145 2.0 Cloverleaf at £15,988 and goes up to the 164 3.0 Cloverleaf executive saloon at £32,260.

MEANWHILE, Ford has upped the stakes to produce the sportiest mid-range saloon with a five-door Mondeo ST24. Four-spoke, 16-inch alloy wheels set it apart from the rest of the range, while side skirts and spoilers offer a sporting look. Under the bonnet is the Duratec 2.5-litre, 170bhp V6 worth a 140mph top speed. The car comes to market as the company enters a five-door hatchback Mondeo into the British Touring car Championships.

Turin is shrouded in bland

ROAD TEST

■ SINCE the launch of the Cinquecento in 1993, Fiat has shown a remarkable flair for innovative design in the mass-produced car market, *writes Helen Mound*. Along with the stylish Punto and the stunning Bravo and Brava, the company has proved that everyday hatchbacks don't have to be everyday designs.

Add to that the gorgeous Coupé and the pretty Barchetta roadster and there's sufficient evidence of some very clever people in the style-houses of Turin.

How then, did the new Fiat Marea make it into production? Despite wearing the new, neat family nose — dark grey grille and horizontal headlights — the Marea and the Marea Weekend (or estate) show a remarkable lack of imagination. It's as if, faced with entering the fiercely competitive medium car sector and well aware of its previous failures in this market with the Regata and the Tempra, Fiat lost its nerve and played safe with a very ordinary-looking pair.

The two cars aren't without individual features: the saloon has vertical shapes in the rear light clusters and flared front and rear wings, the estate has rear light lamps that extend up to the roof and a split rear door. But there's an element of blandness that's disappointing to anyone who has admired Fiat's inspired designs in recent years.

In its defence, the Marea has plenty of other attributes. Ergonomics engineers — originally employed to ensure that the Punto, Bravo and Brava were comfortable for the largest possible proportion of motorists — have calculated that 88 per cent of all possible human frames will be comfortable in the front seats and 97.5 per cent in the rear.

In traditional Fiat style, all models have suspension settings that provide a sporty feel and engines that manage agreeable levels of driver satisfaction. This may be a little tiring for drivers of the smaller-engined models who prefer soft cruisers, but on the whole people buy Fiats for sporting flavour, and in the Marea they won't be disappointed.

Inside there is a degree of style — except if you opt for the rather too beige trim. Fabrics and plastics have an air of quality, although the former are rather plain by today's standards. The centre console on the dashboard houses the ventilation controls and Fiat's neat integrated stereo system from the Brava and Bravo.

Fiat's claim that the Marea is a viable alternative to the trade-off between spacious and practical cars, and performance is valid. It's hard to decide if these are driver's cars first and practical transport second; certainly, they make an ideal company or family car — so long as you're a keen driver.

Fiat Marea: many attributes, but did the company lose its nerve?

FIAT MAREA

Engine: Petrol, 1.6 (103bhp), 1.8 litre (113bhp) and 2-litre (147bhp); diesel, 1.9 (75bhp and 100bhp) and 2.4 diesel (124bhp).

Performance: 1.8-litre — 0-62mph in 10 secs, top speed 121mph.

Economy: 1.8-litre — 28.5mpg in town.

Equipment: Electric front windows, driver's airbag, central locking, height adjustable driver's seat and steering wheel.

Price: From £12,357 for the 1.6SX to £18,087 for the Weekend TD125HLX.

FORECOURT

■ THE OLD model Mazda 323 was sold in Britain from 1985 to 1994 and is still sought as keenly by network dealers as by customers, reports *CAP Black Book*.

The car once described as "efficiency on wheels", the 323 has a reputation for reliability, build quality and for maintaining second-hand values, *writes Vaughan Freeman*.

No matter the age of the car, the hatchback versions are much more desirable than the saloon equivalents, and the 1.3-litre and 1.6-litre cars do best on the retail market, although the 1.6-litre Turbo is not as popular.

The relatively high prices fetched by any 323 on the forecourt reflect the fact that they are fairly scarce second-hand. Best buy is the 1993 L-reg 1.6 GLX Fastback with a sunroof on average mileage, for which you can expect to pay around £8,000. *Avoid the 1.1-litre cars, four-wheel* drive versions, and any tired pre-1986 models.

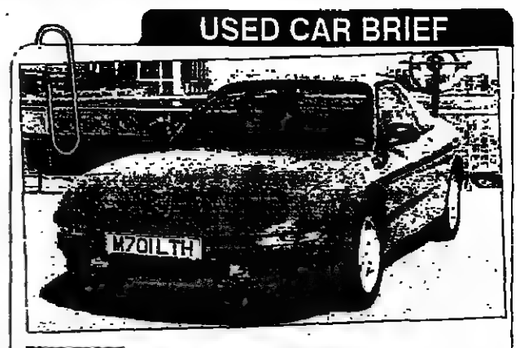
■ WHEN Toyota's Lexus luxury saloon was unveiled, the shock waves throughout European motor manufacturers could almost be felt, so impressive was it. That reputation has never slackened.

The Lexus LS400 has proved very popular during the last 18 to 24 months, due in part to some superb reviews in the motoring sections of the press and on television. At auction, the LS400 has consistently fetched prices *from bidders at the very top end* of anything expected.

The LS400 benefits from tremendous build quality, a silky smooth engine, backed by a long warranty and second-hand values that are best described as "blue chip".

The Lexus was voted America's best car a couple of years ago, and has also garnered plaudits from some observers as one of the finest cars built anywhere in the world during the past decade, which explains why bargains are virtually non-existent. As a result, *expect to pay around £14,000 for* even the earliest examples with high mileage.

USED CAR BRIEF



FORD PROBE
The Probe inherited the role of the Capri coupé in the Ford line-up but has failed to capture the loyalty and following of its predecessor. Built in America and based on the Mazda MX-6, the front wheel-drive Probe was launched in 1994 as a 2-litre, 16-valve and a 2.5-litre, 24-valve V6 worth 165 brake horse power. A mild cosmetic make-over in 1995 added body-coloured mirrors, redesigned sports seats and an improved immobiliser system activated by the ignition key.

GOOD NEWS
Is the equipment: three or five-spoke alloy wheels, anti-theft system with immobiliser, central locking, electric window, split/folding rear seats, electric aerial and tinted glass. A slippery-shaped coupé that in both engine forms gives adequate performance with even the 2.0 litre capable of 125mph.

BAD NEWS
Bland styling too American for British taste. The Probe's four seats will never *seat four in comfort. The rear seats* are best for very small children with short necks and legs but come into their own as over-upholstered catch-alls for maps, cassettes, jackets and briefcases.

LOOK FOR
The 2.5-litre which has an electric sunroof, while 2-litre cars fitted with the "Plus" option pack benefit from sunroof, cruise control and improved audio system. Cars fitted with the optional air conditioning are worth seeking out too.

AVOID
Cars without the sunroof which are not as popular. The V6 engine is reported as prone to valve gear clatter. Watch for stone chip damage especially on the bonnet leading edge, for alloy wheels that have been damaged on kerbs and for scuffed bumpers due to careless parking.

SAFETY
No Department of Transport Safety rating but twin airbags, anti-lock disc brakes, speed sensitive power-steering, quadralink rear suspension and wide sports tyres giving excellent road grip all round.

INSURANCE
from *AA Insurance (0800 444777)* on a 1995 2-litre costs a 35-year-old professional, male or female, living in Winchester with full no claims bonus, £281 a year fully comprehensive. A 22-year-old male, with one year no claims living in south London, pays £2,989 and a similar female pays £2,013.

REPLACEMENT PARTS
(Prices include VAT): Clutch assembly £220; full exhaust £500; catalytic converter £380; headlamp £50; front brake pads (pair) £50; alternator (exchange) £165.

PRICES
Expect to pay £9,000 for a 1994 L-reg 2.0l, 16-valve coupe; £10,500 for a 1995 M-reg 2.0l, 16-valve; £12,750 for a 1996 N-reg 2.0l, 16 valve; £10,500 for a 1994 L-reg 2.5-litre, 24-valve V6; £12,300 for a 1995 M-reg 2.5-litre, 24-valve V6, and £14,800 for a 1996 N-reg 2.5-litre, 24-valve V6.

OVERALL With its Japanese background and American styling, the Probe's disappointing sales might reflect customer suspicion about the car's genes. However, in 2.5-litre guise this 136mph car is a highly competent performer. A bonus is the size of the boot, which becomes even more impressive when the token rear seats are folded down. An underrated and over-looked coupé.

Yamaha generates sweet thunder for riders of a certain age

Paul Myles on the motorbike designed for a generation that wants to go back

Ever since Kawasaki launched its awesome ZZR1100 in 1990, ripping up the speed records with a guaranteed 175mph plus, other factories have been happy to concentrate on developing light, agile, sports bikes more closely related to their race track cousins than Kawasaki's muscle machine.

But manufacturers are now eyeing up the sales potential of providing outrageously powerful machines. For these bikes appeal to the new breed of motorcyclist — the well-heeled, well-fleshed mature owners revisiting the activities of their youth. This time round, though, they have power of wallet, matched only by their exacting demands.

These born-again bikers have been "spoiled" by car ownership. They are used to speed with convenience, comfort with performance. Their sports vehicles can look the part but must provide the ease of use and civilised demeanour as befits people of maturity and social standing. Anyway, your bones can't be crunched into a full racing crouch so easily when you have 40 years plus on the odometer.

For them Yamaha has taken up the speed challenge using a formula developed by its own customers. These enthusiasts wanted the combined power and dependability of Yamaha's old FZR1000 with the light weight and razor-sharp handling of their YZF750.

The larger engine was shoehorned into the small chassis and most people raved about the result. Yamaha has now sensibly followed its owners' wishes and developed the YZF 1000 Thunderace. And, in a bid to break Kawasaki's dominance of the muscle market, the company has developed a radical new fairing to improve the appalling aerodynamics that blights a motorcycle's bid for decent top speeds.

The bodywork's most noticeable feature is the elongated nose cone which gives the machine a Pinocchio charm. It's a concept that Honda has copied and accentuated still further with its newly announced 1100cc Blackbird. Some of the more hysterical specialist press expect 190mph from the Blackbird, though 180mph would be more realistic. The Thunderace, too, has suffered from wild expectations. Many expected it to snatch the speed title, but its 170mph potential fails to trouble the big Kawasaki's flat-out speed.

It seems ironic that the fastest, most powerful, machines on the road are not the pure sports machines. For, like the Kawasaki, the Thunderace is most definitely a machine from the grand tourer stable. That is to say a fast motor cycle aimed more at covering long distances than focused on scratching around race tracks.

The big Yamaha, weighing in at 435lbs, is not the lightest sportster around and it's weight tells in the extra effort needed to haul it through corners. Weight may have also affected the bike's tracking over irregular road surfaces, though I suspect that the tyres, otherwise grippy Pirelli Dragons, do not suit the machine's rather vague steering.

The 1,000cc across-the-frame four-cylinder motor is phenomenally fast, as it should be with a claimed power output of 145bhp. But probably the single biggest performance advantage on the bike are it's brakes. These conventional four-pot calipers are the best I've ridden with and are worth several yards on the opposition charging into a tight bend.

While the Thunderace is dressed in swooping body work styled and painted like a racing bike, the riding position is quite relaxed and comfortable. The rider will suffer few aches over distances, save for the poorly shaped seat that will trouble the best cushioned backside within 100 miles of touring.

Bikes such as the Thunderace and, more especially the new Blackbird, are aimed at the growing numbers of new people coming to motor cycling. These mature adolescents are seduced by the young sexy image. They have the spending power to pay for what they want and what they want is a fantasy vehicle to pander their egos while being none too demanding in the process.

Taproom bragging about the bike's speed potential is as much an attraction for these owners as performing the feat itself. And they get to stand around this racy little number in equally nanty leather suits and boots.

With the Thunderace, these thrill seekers get oodles of speed, comfort and style and all for just under £9,000 — not small change, but little enough for a First Class ticket to return to your youth.

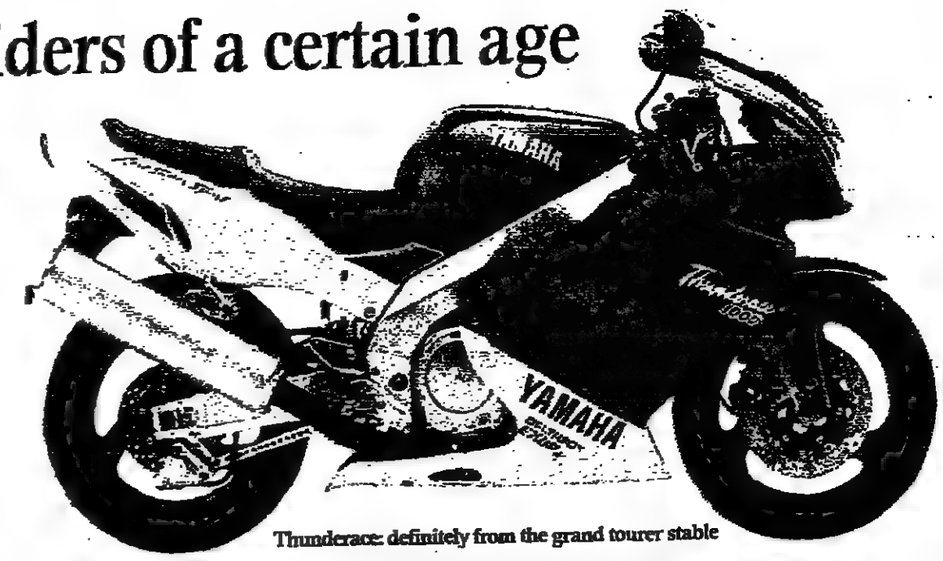
THUNDERACE

Engine: Liquid-cooled, 4-cylinder, double overhead cam 20-valve, 1-litre developing 145bhp at 10,000rpm through 5-speed gearbox and final chain drive.

Body: Aluminium frame with telescopic multi-adjustable front suspension.

Performance: 0-60mph in 2.8 seconds, top speed 170mph.

Price: £8,999 (plus £250 charges).



Thunderace: definitely from the grand tourer stable

My dream car's the one I don't drive

STEERING COLUMN

Graham Swift, author of *Last Orders*, talks to **Eve-Ann Prentice**

Graham Swift, winner of last year's Booker Prize, was at the centre of controversy earlier this week when he denied that he took the storyline and style for his prize-winning novel, *Last Orders*, from William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*.

Writing in *The Times* on Monday, Swift launched a vehement rebuttal of suggestions of plagiarism made by John Frow, Professor of English at the University of Queensland in a letter to *The Australian's* Review of Books.

Last Orders tells how four men take the ashes of a butcher from south London, to scatter on the sea at Margate. Since the plot revolves around the drive, and one of the main characters is a car dealer, some of the novel dwells on the nature of man and car.

How did you first learn to drive?

With gritted teeth. It took me years to recover from the doomed lessons I had in my teens. I just thought there were some people (my father) who were meant to drive and others (me) who weren't. But when I was 35 I signed up with a driving school and spent months getting intimately acquainted with the road lay-out of south-west London.

What was your first car?

A Vauxhall Nova, because it was easy to park and there was a Vauxhall dealer just down the road in case anything went wrong.

What car do you drive now?

A Renault Megane. (There's a Renault dealer just down the road, too.)

Do you enjoy driving?

Almost never, though just occasionally, driving down an empty M4 before dawn or zipping along lovely Devon lanes, I begin to see what the fuss is about.

What is your dream car?

The hired limo my publisher sometimes lays on to take me to out-of-town reading engagements. Currently it's a very shiny, comfortable, black Mercedes, but the key feature is the great driver, Mike, who knows the quickest route to everywhere.

What is your worst habit in the car?

I'm told I tut a lot, though I'm sure this is an unwarranted slur.

What infuriates you about most other drivers?

You mean apart from the fact that they exist? I do slightly mind when you do something polite, like letting another car in front of you, and the driver doesn't give that vestigial wave.

What is the most unusual thing you have done in your car?

Drive it. I don't need a car for my work because I work mostly at home. I don't drive much in London because it takes for ever and there's nowhere to park. I don't drive when going out for the evening because it stops you having a drink.

What do you listen to while driving?

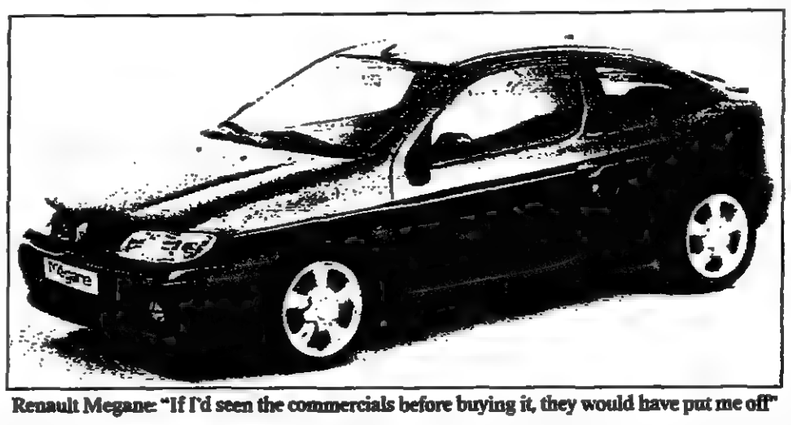
A pretty fair mix, from Sixties Soul to Ravel and Schubert, choral Purcell or Handel when driving through rolling English countryside are pretty unbeatable. One of the all-time great road songs must be Joni Mitchell's "Coyote".

If you were Secretary of State for Transport, what is the first thing you would do?

Announce that the privatisation of public transport has been a completely lunatic idea, and resign at once in shame.

What is your worst/favourite car advertisement?

I'm amazed that any work. There was one for something called a Probe which I thought was a spoof — why not call it a Penis and have done with it? I did think the one where a couple of hillbillies mistake a VW for a UFO was rather clever, though as it was based on that old standby of finding foreigners stupid, it's probably not to my credit that I laughed. If I'd seen the Megane commercials before I bought mine, they would certainly have put me off. Why should anyone want to identify with a smirking nerd who has conversations with his car?



Renault Megane: "If I'd seen the commercials before buying it, they would have put me off"

MERCEDES

500SL 91J Brilliant Silver, Blue lthr, 19k, FSH, Massive spec. 18" alloys etc. £44,995. PX. 01422 886677/0802 857600 t

E36 AMG
Coupe. 1995, high specification, tracker, mint condition, 6 month MB wty. Offers.
0181 398 6663

E220
Convertible. 95M, green, FSH, 20,000 miles. CD player, heated seats, vgc. £35,500.
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E300D
Estate, brilliant silver/black int, 7 seater, 1996, auto, es/r, FSH, 1 owner, immaculate, £29,000.
Tel. 01789 470435

280E
Elegance, Metallic Aqua Marine Blue. Automatic with 5 speed. Cream Leather, electric seats with memory, 3rd head restraint, park distance control, climate control, 8 hole alloys, registered Jan'97, 1,200 miles. £40,495.
0802 957685

300E
'91, 4Matic (computer controlled 4wd), VGC, lthr, FMBSH, all extras, offers.
01142 685388

400SEL
93K, met blue/grey leather, FMBSH, every possible spec, high mileage, M.D's car. £32,000.
Phone: 01444 450405
Fax: 01444 457112.

500SE PN,
12/k, FSH, full spec, silver/blue, leather, 8 hole, mem seats, v. high spec, air con, excellent cond, privately owned. £9,250.
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SL320
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S420
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01276 685478 (w), 01276 686132 (h).

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560SEC
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E200
Multi Valve, L reg, Silver, ESR, alloys, £1k tow bar, 60k, FSH, £13,950.
01702 588 922

500 SEC
H reg 1990, blue/black with cream hide, 64k mls, FMBSH, just serviced, alloys, a/bag, every extra. Immac. Showroom cond, must be seen.
£19,000
0181 803 5997.

E280
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C36 AMG
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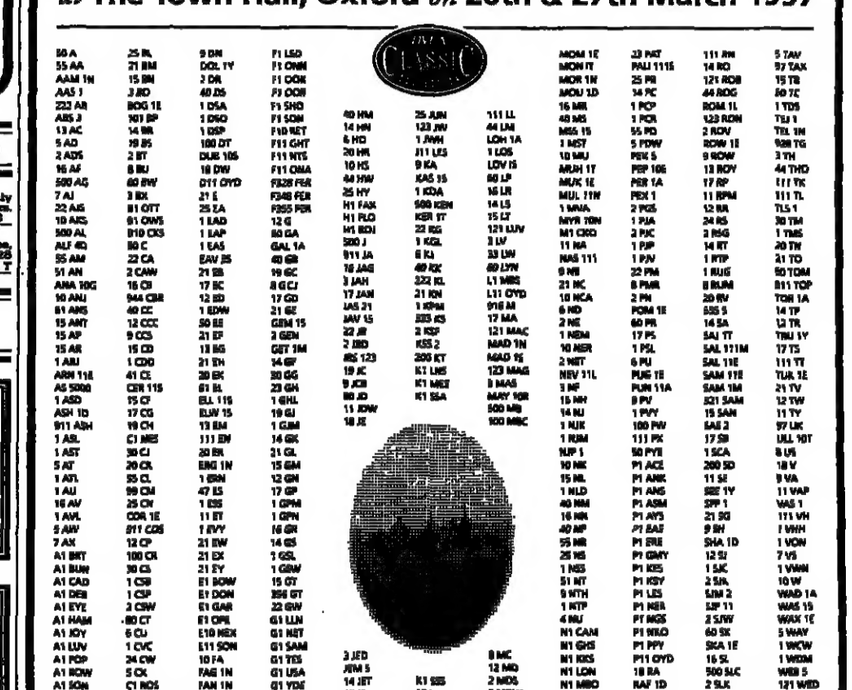

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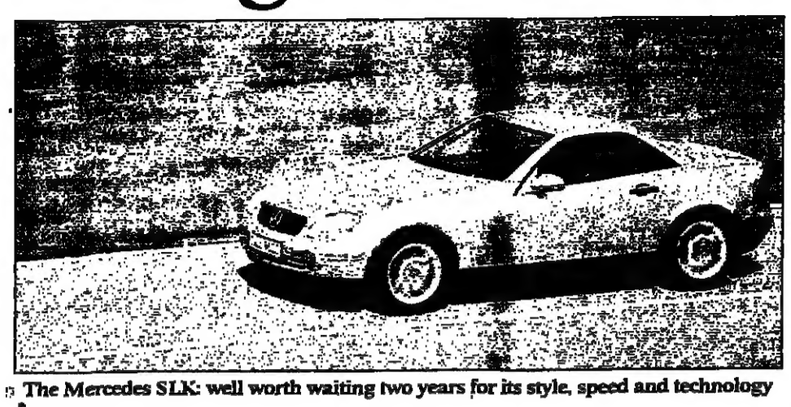
Alan Copps on the SLK experience

Just sit back and enjoy the magic tourer



The Mercedes SLK: well worth waiting two years for its style, speed and technology

Some cars have unexpected virtues. When offered a Mercedes SLK to drive for a week, I jumped at the chance. Who wouldn't? But what, I wondered, could I add to its literature?

The neat little two-seater was one of the most lauded cars of last year, praised by pundits from all corners of the globe. If you want to order one in Britain now you'll have to wait two years for delivery. Such is the demand that a few speculators who booked early have been able to sell on their cars for premiums of up to £15,000, half the basic on-the-road price.

Since the car was launched, I have read acres of newsprint in praise of its startling good looks, enthusing about its performance and marvelling at the ingenuity of its folding roof, which tucks into the boot at the touch of a button.

Having driven the car for 500 miles, I can report that, with one reservation, all these accounts were justified. But there's one thing I would like to add, which perhaps all those pundits overlooked in their enthusiasm for style, speed or technology: the SLK is simply the most comfortable car I have ever sat in.

That doesn't just mean that by some quirk of design the scarlet leather sports seats in my sparkling silver model were peculiarly adapted to the gangling frame of a bony six-footer with a creaking spine. They faced a far tougher test. My wife, Anna, was in the final month of pregnancy when we set off on a 130-mile non-stop drive from London to the West Country. We cruised motorways, dashed along A roads, and on twisting byways I found a few opportunities to wind up the supercharged engine and corner at speed.

Not perhaps the ideal way to treat a lady in such an advanced state of pregnancy, but there were no complaints from the passenger seat. And when we got to our destination, Anna didn't want to get out. "This is just the most comfortable seat I've been in for weeks," she said, as I held the wide door open.

There is, I discovered, a reason for this sensation. The seats of the SLK have individual suspension. In place of the usual steel springs each seat has a polyurethane cushion mounted on a plastic shell. But the shell itself is jointed at the front and linked to the metal seat frame by two small coil springs at the rear, so it floats on the frame, insulating driver and passenger from jerks and jolts but still transmitting the road "feel" that is so vital if you want to use the performance of a car like this.

The passenger seat has another attribute. Its cushion contains electronic sensors which register the weight of the occupant and whether a child safety seat has been installed. If the load on the seat is less than 12kg, the sensors automatically signal for the passenger airbag to be turned off, thus preventing the possibility of "airbag injury" to a child in the event of an accident. Mercedes' own child seat incorporates sensors that give out the same signal.

This is just one example of the tremendous attention to detail in the interior. The instruments are a delight to look at and, like the controls, are designed to make driving a pleasure. The car handles with absolute certainty, its road manners are impeccable and precise in the classic German fashion. There are such yards of power and roadholding to spare it's difficult to think of anywhere in Britain where you could approach the limits of its performance. But even at slower speeds it's tremendous fun to drive.

The "hairy sports car" enthusiast might jib at the standard automatic transmission and the sophisticated creature comforts, but that would be to set one's face against progress. In terms of technology directed towards driving pleasure it's a worthy successor to the legendary Mercedes sports cars of the past.

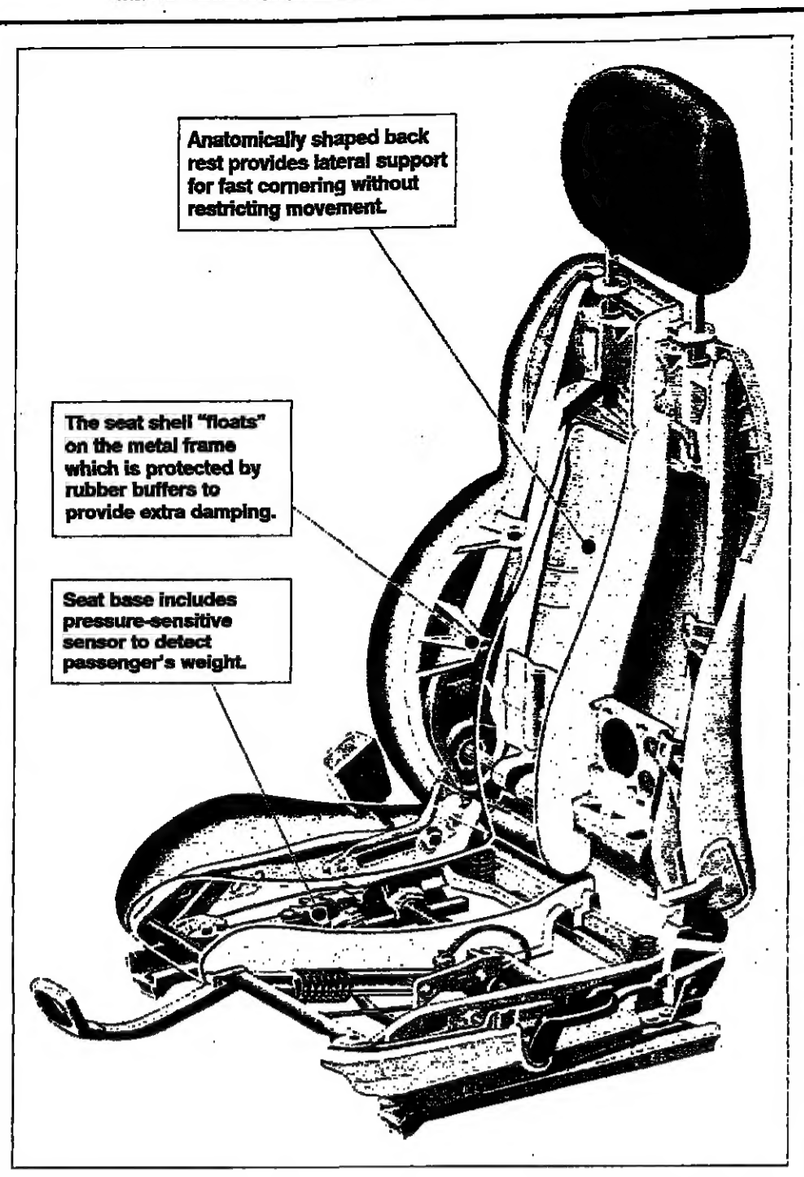
Of all the cars I've driven recently, this more than any was the one in which I felt I could cross continents rather than mere countries. It makes you want to see thousands of miles of road unwind before you. But there lies the contradiction, not just for the SLK but for several of the current crop of roadsters: for although Mercedes call it a "small sports car" the SLK is really a very grand little tourer — for those who know how to travel light.

When the roof is packed away inside the upper half of the boot, then, thanks to the clever collapsible spare tyre, there is room for the regulation set of golf clubs plus two overnight bags. But if you're going to travel thousands rather than hundreds of miles you probably want to take more than that. There is a luggage rack option, which will take bags, skis or even a bicycle, and which works with roof up or down. But I fear that might detract from the thrill of open-air motoring, and frankly, if you've got a car like this you'd have to have a very exhilirating hobby to beat the sheer pleasure of driving. I'd just choose to travel light.

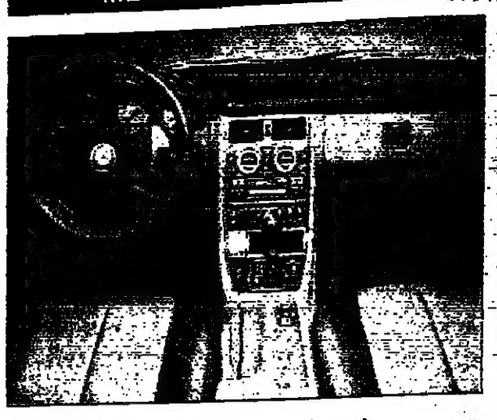
My reservation? Like the other great grand tourer launched last year, the Jaguar XK8, the SLK comes only with an automatic gearbox. Put it in "drive" and it changes gear with wonderful smoothness, speed and timing. If you want to be old-fashioned and experience the thrill of driving, it includes a second gate so the driver can use the car as a clutchless manual, although its staggered design takes a bit of getting used to.

But it is also a "clever" automatic, that is to say it is programmed to learn the driver's style and make changes accordingly. Unfortunately this means that on the odd occasion it proves too clever by half, trying to read the driver's mind and changing up too soon. If you're heading round a flat-out corner this can seriously spoil your enjoyment; at best it's an irritation, at worst disconcerting.

But that is the only fault I could find. The engine is fine; its quality outstanding, its looks unlikely to date. It's a car to last a lifetime, and is well worth a two-year wait.



MERCEDES-BENZ SLK



Engine: 2.3-litre, four-cylinder supercharged producing 193bhp at 5,300rpm.
Transmission: Five-speed computer-controlled automatic with clutchless manual option.
Performance: 0-62mph in 7.5 seconds. Maximum speed 130mph.
Economy: Urban 21.2mpg; extra-urban 40.4mpg; combined cycle 31.4mpg.
Price: £30,090 on the road.

WIN AN SLK

■ READERS today have a final chance to win a Mercedes Benz SLK and help raise money for Comic Relief. See page 17.

On the Silverstone route to safer driving

Our search for Britain's best company driver can take entrants well off the beaten track

One of the great attractions of our annual search for Britain's best company car driver is the chance to take part in the finals at Silverstone, *writes Alan Copps*.

The choice of a racing track might on the face of it seem at odds with the emphasis of our contest on skill rather than speed, but there is no denying the thrill of driving at the home of the British Grand Prix. And there are tests of skill that can be staged safely on the track which could not be attempted on the road.

Among the most exciting is the skid car, a Rover 416 mounted on hydraulically-controlled castors which can vary the grip of front and rear wheels to simulate different kinds of skid, without resort to the pools of water or detergent commonly used on skid pans. The point of this is that most drivers experience their first skid on the road and very few manage to meet the situation without either leaving the road or hitting another vehicle. There can be few more graphic reminders of that fact than the carnage left by the M42 pile-ups earlier this week.

With broad acres of asphalt available, a few pirouettes across the Silverstone track under expert instruction can give a driver the confidence to deal with situations such as those which found so many wanting.

The Times-Lease Plan Company Car Driver of the Year competition is designed to find the safest and smoothest high-mileage working motorist in the country. It is also designed to raise awareness among company car drivers of their high accident rate and among fleet managers of the benefits of driver training, now one of the main activities at Silverstone through the work of the Silverstone Driving Centre.

Although this encompasses everything from learning to handle a single-seat racing car to driving on a loose-surfaced rally stage, one of the most popular courses is that which concentrates on road skills. It is especially attractive to both company motorists and those who want a bit of extra confidence to handle a high-powered family car.

In addition to a session with the fiendish skid-pan car — the controls can be adjusted by the instructor even while the car is in motion — this includes a high-speed lane changing exercise on one of the widest sections of track and up to three hours of detailed instruction in road conditions.

This is the package that awaits our 12 finalists, who first have to make it through demanding tests at regional heats. All you have to do to enter is raise a team of three drivers whose use of a car is included in their remuneration package and then gain the endorsement of your fleet manager. Just fill in the form below and you could win a day at Silverstone.

The Silverstone skid car: castors on the back wheels will test your control skills

THE TIMES Lease Plan Company Car Driver 1997

Entry Form

THE TIMES Lease Plan Company Car Driver 1997

• About your company

Name of entrant: ..... Position: ..... Signature: .....
NB: Entrant should be director/ senior manager responsible for the company's car fleet
Company name: .....
Address: .....
Post code: ..... Tel number: ..... Fax number: .....
Nature of business: ..... Number of employees: ..... Number of company cars: .....

• Nominated drivers

	Surname	Forename	Job title	Age	Points on licence (max 3)
1					
2					
3					
4	RESERVE				

• Competition rules

The closing date for entries is March 28 1997. Drivers must be 24 years of age or over to enter. Only corporate entries will be accepted. Drivers must be nominated by the director or senior manager responsible for the company car fleet. Drivers must be nominated in teams of three. The entrant may also nominate himself/herself as part of the team. Companies can only enter one team. Competitors must drive a company car or vehicle as part of their remuneration package. Qualification for the team/company award will be dependent upon a written test to be completed by the entrant at that team's regional heat. Employees of Lease Plan, DriveTech, Nissan, News International and the Birkdale Group are not permitted to enter. In the spirit of the competition, competitors who reached the final in two previous consecutive years, specialist organisations such as driver training companies, police, the armed forces and the like are not permitted to enter. A place in the regional heats will be confirmed in writing at least ten days prior to the heat. In the event of over-subscription, qualification to the regional heats will be judged through a random driver telephone questionnaire. If the team does not qualify the entrant will be informed in writing prior to the heat. Feedback on each driver's performance will be available after the competition. The reserve driver will be called upon at the regional heat should one of the first three drivers be unable to compete. In the event of a finalist not being able to compete in the final, the next highest scoring driver from the regional heats will be invited to compete in their place. The prize for the winner will be a special trip for two to the Portuguese Grand Prix. The team/company prize will be a driver training programme for 12 employees and the use of a Nissan vehicle for three months. Cash alternatives are not available. The judge's decision is final.

• Which venue?

Please select your 1st and 2nd choice location/date of regional heat (indicate 1 or 2 in box):

Elstree, Herts	Friday, 25 April	☐
Macclesfield, Cheshire	Friday, 9 May	☐
Bracknell, Berks	Friday, 16 May	☐
Nottingham	Friday, 30 May	☐
Gatwick, Surrey	Friday, 6 June	☐
Coventry	Friday, 13 June	☐

You must ensure that entrant and nominated drivers are able for both first and second choice dates and for the final at Silverstone on Friday, 4 July 1997. Initial qualification may be by telephone questionnaire. Entrants and drivers will be contacted on an individual basis.

Once you have completed this form, fax it back to Lease Plan on 01753 620676 or post to Marketing Dept, Lease Plan, Thames Side, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 1TY. For further information call Lease Plan on 01753 797284

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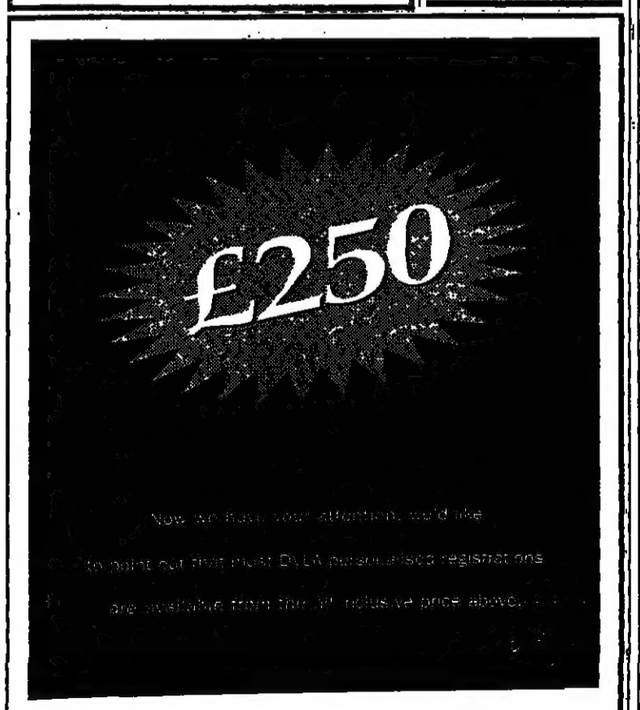

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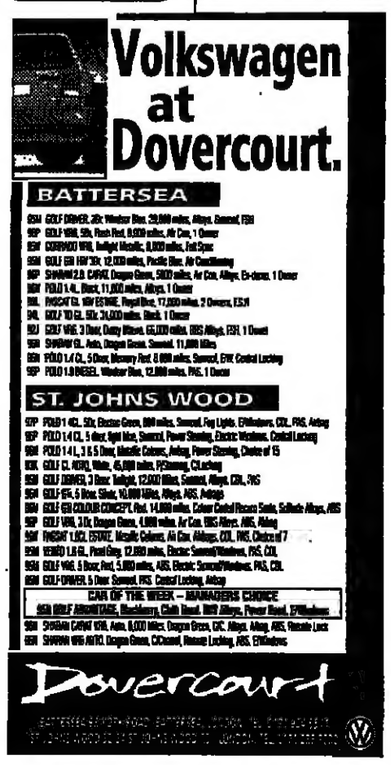

Volkswagen at Dovercourt.

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96P GOLF VR6, 5Dr, Flash Red, 8,000 miles, Air Con, 1 Owner
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95M GOLF GTI 16V 3Dr, 12,000 miles, Pacific Blue, Air Conditioning
96P SHARAN 2.0 CARAT, Dragon Green, 5000 miles, Air Con, Alloys, Ex-demo, 1 Owner
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95L PASSAT GL 16V ESTATE, Royal Blue, 17,000 miles, 2 Owners, FSH
94L GOLF TD GL 5Dr, 34,000 miles, Black, 1 Owner
92J GOLF VR6, 3 Door, Classy Mauve, 65,000 miles, BBS Alloys, FSH, 1 Owner
95N SHARAN GL Auto, Dragon Green, Sunroof, 11,000 Miles
95N POLO 1.4 CL, 5 Door, Mercury Red, 8,000 miles, Sunroof, E/W, Central Locking
95P POLO 1.9 DIESEL, Windsor Blue, 12,000 miles, PAS, 1 Owner

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96N POLO 1.4 L, 3 & 5 Door, Metallic Colours, Airbag, Power Steering, Choice of 15
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96N GOLF GTi, 5 Door, Slate, 10,000 Miles, Alloys, ABS, Airbags
95N GOLF GTI COLOUR CONCEPT, Red, 14,000 miles, Colour Coded Recaro Seats, Solitude Alloys, ABS
96P GOLF VR6, 3 Dr, Dragon Green, 4,000 miles, Air Con, BBS Alloys, ABS, Airbag
96N PASSAT 1.8CL ESTATE, Metallic Colours, Air Con, Airbags, CDL, PAS, Choice of 7
95N VENTO 1.8 GL, Pearl Grey, 12,000 miles, Electric Sunroof/Windows, PAS, CDL
95N GOLF VR6, 5 Door, Red, 5,000 miles, ABS, Electric Sunroof/Windows, PAS, CDL
95N GOLF DRIVER, 5 Door, Sunroof, PAS, Central Locking, Airbag

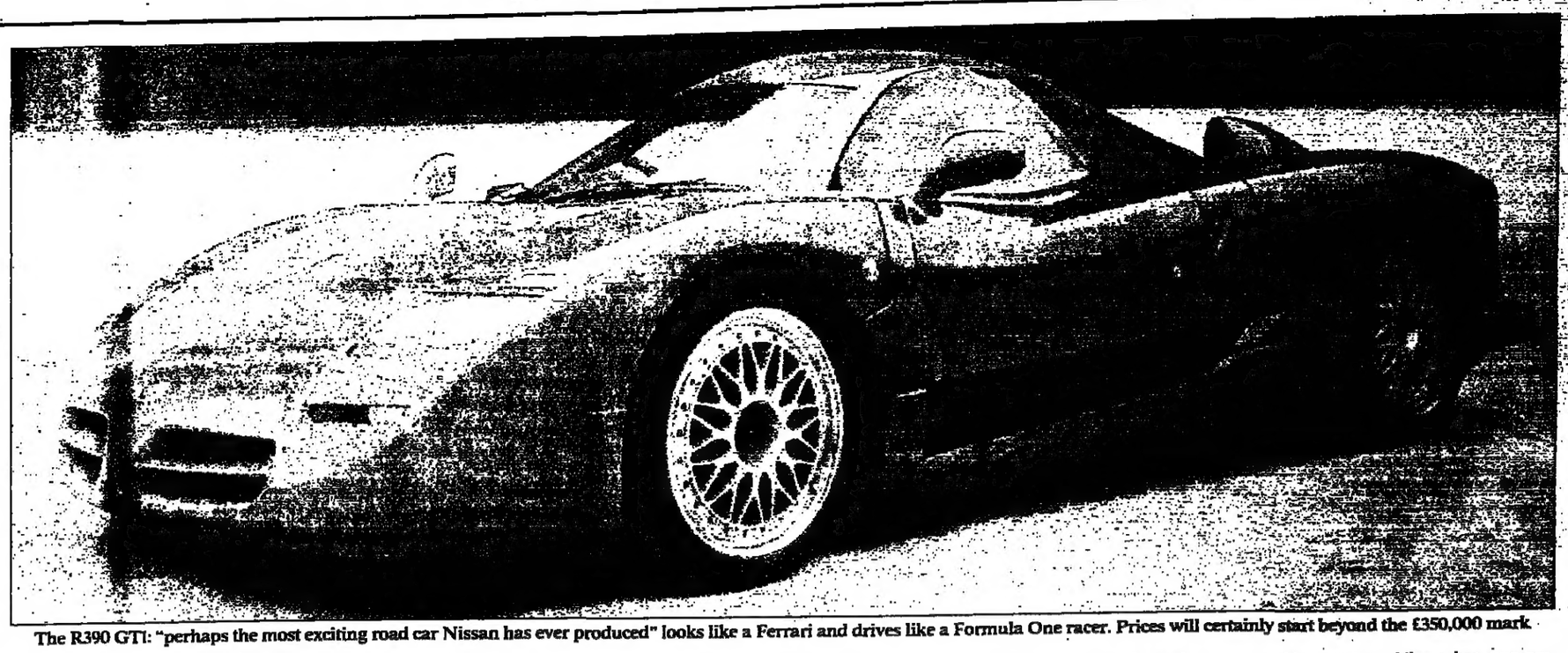
CAR OF THE WEEK – MANAGERS CHOICE
95N GOLF AVANTAGE, Blackberry, Cloth Hood, BBS Alloys, Power Hood, E/Windows

96N SHARAN CARAT VR6, Auto, 8,000 Miles, Dragon Green, C/C, Alloys, Airbag, ABS, Remote Lock
95N SHARAN VR6 AUTO, Dragon Green, C/Control, Remote Locking, ABS, E/Windows

Dovercourt

Guess who made this for Le Mans

Kevin Eason reports on a thoroughbred from an unlikely stable



The R390 GTI: "perhaps the most exciting road car Nissan has ever produced" looks like a Ferrari and drives like a Formula One racer. Prices will certainly start beyond the £350,000 mark

Before the man in the hat contemplates trading in his little Sunny hatchback, he might want to know the price of this latest Nissan ... that's right, said Nissan.

This extraordinary, ultra high-tech beauty is astonishingly from the same company that brought you the titchy Micra, the repmobile Primera and the incredibly dull Sunny, the car with a daft name driven very slowly in the middle lane of the motorway by little men in trilbies.

But Nissan has decided to go racing at this year's Le Mans 24-hour endurance event and has to make a road car to qualify. The result is a glorious machine which bears so little relation to Nissan's mainstream products, it is almost beyond belief.

This is a car that looks like a Ferrari, drives like a Formula One racer and is a Nissan that even the snootiest car snob would die for. Strange, but true.

Not that the chaps at Sunderland got anywhere near the R390 GTI: the car was hand-built by TWR, the company which makes Damon Hill's Arrows racing car and engineers the racing Volvos for the British Touring Car Championships. TWR has made the Le Mans racer for Nissan and its engineers will produce the road car too.

That is road car in the singular, because Nissan has no need — nor any orders — to make more than one, which has to be homologated for road use to satisfy the racing authorities. Nissan must prove the race car is based on a road-going model to enter the GT series.

Not that there are so many differences between them: the road car is a two-seater and clothed in a light, carbon fibre monocoque body which covers a 3.5-litre V8 with twin turbo-chargers, developed by Nissan for this car, and mated up to a six-speed sequential racing gearbox. The all-round double wishbone suspension was developed exclusively for the R390.

With masterful understatement, Peter Slater, Nissan Europe's vice president says that the R390 is "perhaps the most exciting road car Nissan has ever produced". Perhaps? Try telling that to Sunny owners. Production begins later in the year and start saving now if you want the most glamorous 200mph Nissan ever made because prices will certainly start beyond the £350,000 mark.

With only one (very rich) owner

Colin Barraclough in Geneva attends the most regal automobile auction

The 1971 Lamborghini Miura SVJ bought by Nicholas Cage

If Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi believed in anything, he believed in excess. At one time, his car collection numbered 3,000. Virtually single-handed, he kept several major European manufacturers afloat with his demands for top-of-the-line performance cars with specific modifications.

But when the cars arrived, he lost interest: after nearly 20 years festering in a warehouse on the edge of Tehran, ten supercars formerly owned by the Shah of Iran were sold on Wednesday at auction in Geneva. Few had more than 5,000 miles on the clock.

It's not often that cars from a royal household go on sale, so it was not surprising to find a crowded saleroom at Geneva's Salon International d'Automobile. Telephone bidders included American screen star Nicholas Cage, who snapped up the star of the show, a 1971 Lamborghini Miura SVJ with only 2,000 miles on the clock, for a cool £280,000, more than twice the estimate. In total, the Shah's cars fetched £450,000, almost double the highest estimate.

The collection, sold by Brooks Europe, included a 1974 V12 Ferrari given to the Shah by King Hussein of Jordan, an Aston Martin V8 and several unusual Rolls-Royces.

The Shah fled Iran when the going got tough in 1979. Ayatollah Khomeini's new government seized the cars and they remained in secret store until they were hawked to an Arab businessman in 1993.

In Geneva, it was clear that bidders were buying a slice of history. Peter Ratcliffe, a laid-back Rolls-Royce enthusiast from Ascot, was typical. "Look, I'm just a guy who likes Rolls-Royces," he said, after buying the Shah's Corniche Convertible, complete with flashing police lights and flag masts. "I got a 27-year-old Rolls with probably the lowest mileage in the world and a unique royal history. I got the best buy of the show."

DR DASHBOARD

My best advice is that you lie down ... on a couch

Q A bit of fog and the country grinds to a halt with all these multiple accidents. I cracked down the motorway, passing all those "nervous Nellies" in the inside lanes. Why can't people drive quickly in all conditions?

A The doctor hesitates to counter with such a simplistic answer, but could it be those "nervous Nellies", as you quaintly put it, were quite keen on staying alive? Let me ask what speed you were doing to overtake the Nelly people.

Q About the usual for the outside lane of the motorway, around 80mph, which is normal these days, isn't it?

A This surgery is a haven for the sick: you need a psychiatrist. You slow down in fog because you can't see, you daftie. When the fog is dense, even the light from your headlamps will be reflected, which means you must slow down to reduce your braking distance.

Q Seems obvious, but you can normally see fog lamps ahead anyway, can't you?

A Can you? How do you know which are fog lamps and which are activated brake lights? Exactly. And on long trips, you might not be concentrating so hard because the blanket of fog will make you feel even more relaxed in your nice, warm car. So you need to be alert, curb your speed and concentrate hard on rear lights.

Q All right, I get the drift. Anything else that can help?

A Yes. Don't blindly follow any lights in front. The vehicle you are following could be ploughing off the road, so watch the lane markings. And for God's sake, take care — or next time I see you, it will be to put bones in plaster.

هكذا من الاصل